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TRUE WOMANHOOD

Hints

ON THE FORMATION OF WOMANLY CHARACTER

BY

REV. FRANKLIN JOHNSON, D.D.

"That our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." — Ps. cxliv. 12.

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PREFACE.

THE nineteenth century is in some sense a new era for woman. A better education is offered her; many novel spheres of activity are opened to her; and she is incited to ambitions of which hitherto she has been afraid. She has become the subject of much controversy; and she has entered into the debate far enough to experience its perplexities, if not to reach any fixed conclusions. The object of these pages is to remind her that the formation of a noble Christian character is still her highest duty, and also to aid her to distinguish the good and the evil in the tendencies of the time that affect her most strongly, and to point out some means by which she may avail herself of the one, and protect herself from the other.

TRUE WOMANHOOD.

CHARACTER-BUILDING.

"That our daughters may be as corner-stones, polished after the similitude of a palace." — Ps. cxliv. 12.

THE fatalist regards the character as a tree, which grows according to a fixed law, unable to alter the pattern of a single leaf: the Christian regards it as a building, whose materials you select, and whose walls you lay with your own hands. Were I a fatalist, I would not appear before you, for I should believe that I might as well exhort the oak to become a pine, as to talk to you of a better life; but, being a Christian, I know that I speak of a task which each one of you can perform, and I may hope to assist you in some measure. I shall consider at present only the general methods which you ought to employ.

In building a structure of any importance, the first attention must be paid to the foundations. If these are de-

fective, the structure may be fair, but it cannot be durable. The Pyramids of Ghizeh have outlasted the tempests of centuries: the temples and palaces of Babylon and Nineveh have perished. The Pyramids of Ghizeh are planted on a ledge of rock. The magnificent architecture of Babylon and Nineveh, the wonder of the world, has disappeared, because, as Rawlinson observes, it reposed upon the yielding soil; and this, dissolved in the rains, or pressed down by immense burdens, gave way, till the pavements yawned, and the walls leaned and tottered and fell. We have learned that no house can stand long which does not stand on some solid basis; but we have not yet learned as clearly that a character must have strong foundations, if, when put to any severe test, it is to prove worthy of admiration and trust. And the foundations of your character are nothing else than your opinions and convictions: if these are very erroneous, the whole fabric must be insecure.

You should hold the truths of Christianity firmly; and you should build upon them. There are many who believe that which we teach, but they build upon selfishness and passion; and there are many who doubt, and even reject, our most holy faith, and yet seem to build structures of beauty. We know that those who hold the truth in unrighteousness, and build upon the mere soil of greed and appetite, must perish; but what shall we say of those who reject the truth, and yet erect fair lives for our wonder and delight? In Pisa they sell you cathedrals of alabaster whiter than snow: but you must keep them under glass, or they will be stained by the invisible dust

of the air; and you must shelter them beneath your roof, or some storm will break their columns. They answer no high purpose, for no anthem and no incense can ever ascend to Heaven from their petty aisles. Notwithstanding their purity and symmetry, they are but mimicry, of little intrinsic worth. Even such is the most pleasing character, if it is not grounded on correct principles, a creation of the frailest grace, that may go down at any time in the blasts of temptation and trial, and that shall fail before the inspection of God hereafter, even as it has failed to glorify Him here. Our Lord has told us the fate of the foolish man who built his house upon the sand. The prevalent maxim that "it is no matter what you believe," was invented by Satan for the destruction of souls. It requires but little penetration to discover that she who believes devoutly in the existence of Almighty God, in the immortality of the soul, in the joys and woes of eternity, in the love which led Christ to lay aside the robes of Deity and die on the cross for His foes, and in the beneficent offices of the Holy Spirit, has within herself the substructure of a grander character than any which can be reared upon the ever-shifting waste of doubt and denial.

Second. There are two general methods of forming the character, that of suppression, and that of development. Both should be employed. Many persons, however, employ the first alone; while, if any choice is made, the second is far preferable. The method of suppression consists in checking those impulses which are wrong: the method of development consists in the exercise and edu-

cation of our higher nature, in the confidence that our meaner propensities, being deprived of the vitality necessary to their vigor, will wither and decay with comparatively little resistance. You should train yourself much as you would train another. Let a mother set herself to the task of watching and rebuking the faults of her daughter, giving but slight care to the nobler activities of the intellect, the imagination, and the affections, and what will be the result? After a while she will confess with sorrow her utter failure, and she will cherish in her heart the secret conviction that her child is specially depraved. But let her change her course, let her find the girl some employment at once interesting and useful, and let her pay earnest attention to the discipline of those powers which we recognize as most lofty, and she will soon rejoice in her success. So shall you fail, or prosper, in the formation of an admirable character, as you forget or as you remember this distinction.

The method of repression is defective in two respects. First, it does not succeed in checking the evil impulses of the soul. We will suppose that you are groaning under some great temptation, and that you shut yourself in your room to combat it. You pray; you abhor yourself; you picture to yourself the terrible consequences of the deed; and at last, when you can hold out no longer, you yield. Or, if the storm passes, and leaves you under a clear sky, it is but for a moment; another tempest gathers; another trial approaches. Let us suppose now that you meet it in a different manner: you pray as before, but you also go forth and engage in some task that

taxes the nobler elements of your being. You forget the solicitation to sin. You are made free before you are aware.

The second defect of this method is, that, even should it result in the suppression of the evil within us, it does not provide for the invigoration and guidance of the good. Of what use is it to destroy the weeds of your garden, if you cultivate no flowers in their place? If you should spend all your time in uprooting obnoxious growths from the ground, you would produce a dark and dreary desert, but no roses or lilies, except such as might chance to spring from seed you did not plant, and to grow without the discipline of your hands. You have seen persons who were endowed by nature with very superior qualities of mind and heart, but whose intellect had no power of sustained and judicial activity, and whose affections and charities, though warm, were fitful and often indiscreet. These persons have pursued the course which we now condemn.

Some regard religion as the mere suppression of our evil impulses and propensities. Such was the error of the monks and nuns, who abandoned the world for caves and cloisters; and they found in the deepest solitudes the very demons from which they fled. They would have accomplished their purpose far better, had they remained with their fellows in the active prosecution of the Master's work. For Christianity requires more than the crucifixion of our lower nature: it secures the freedom and enlargement of the higher; it cuts the fetters which keep the judgment in bondage, link the heart

to perishable objects, and cause the will to lie supine, or to act only at the bidding of selfishness and passion; it flings open the windows of the soul, and bids it look upward and soar out, with the whole universe as its sphere, the glory of God as the object of its mission, and a happy eternity as the reward of its toils.

Third. It is necessary to study those models of excellence with which history abounds. If you will visit the studio of any sculptor, you will find that his room is adorned with pictures and statues which represent the highest efforts of genius. They are copies of the greatest works; they are ideals of excellence. To you they may be mere decorations: to him they are the instruments of his labor and the means of his success. He has placed them where they are, not that they may charm his visitors, or impart pleasure when he has leisure or repose when he is weary; but rather that they may stimulate his ambition and add to his powers, by showing him at every moment the height to which he should attain, and by inflaming his fancy with suggestions of beauty. He avoids the slavish repetition of these matchless productions; but having them ever before him, and living as it were in their society, he catches their spirit, and brings it forth in new forms. Now, I would not have you pattern yourself after any mere human being, however exalted or holy. The character of Christ is the only one in the sad history of the world so perfect that you may make it the object of absolute imitation; and He was not only the Son of man, but also the Son of God. Your Maker designed that you should differ from all others. He is so

affluent in invention that He never repeats a soul; and when He created you He decreed that throughout eternity there should not be another like you. Having stamped you with peculiarities, He would not have you obliterate them. He desires that you remain as He formed you to be, distinct from all that have gone before, and from all that shall follow. But, while you should not render yourself a travesty of any person, by studying those who have achieved the greatest conquest over their defects and the nearest approach to the Divine, you may assimilate unconsciously such of their traits as are most admirable, and thus derive assistance from a thousand sources, while at the same time you remain true to the law of your own nature. Fortunately, the records of the past present an array of heroic and saintly women, whose virtues have made the world more tolerable; and chief among these are the wives, the mothers, the daughters, of Holy Scripture, from Eve, the unhappy mother of all our woes to Mary, the mother of Him who has rebuked our woes, and opened Paradise to His followers. The danger is that your attention will be caught by the gaudy and gay who have figured in courts and palaces, whose wit has charmed the mightiest, whose cold-hearted guile has turned philosophers into simpering beaux, whose husbands, whose children, whose God, have been neglected or abandoned for the flatteries of society or for schemes of political advancement more befitting the sterner sex. In that case, you would be like the student of art who should select for habitual contemplation the glaring colors of Rubens in preference to the less obtrusive tints of

Titian, and prefer the writhing marbles of Bernini to the elegance and moderation of Canova: as his works would exhibit abundant evidence of his error, so would your qualities evince yours. Goodness has often walked in the shade: do not fear to seek it there.

Fourth. The formation of character is an indirect process: that is, you cannot, by the mere determination of your will, repress the evil or evoke the good within you; and therefore you should bring yourself under such influences as are adapted to shape and mould you aright. Many persons err in regard to this: they suppose that the only prerequisite to success is a resolution to be good. Can you lift your body off the ground, and hold it suspended in the air, by the fiat of your mind? You dream of flying like a bird; but when you awake you are still held down to the earth. If you would mount on high, you must make use of some appropriate appliance, a stairway or a balloon. Now, a similar law governs the soul, as Bushnell has shown us in his remarkable sermon on Christian Ability, which he reduces to what he terms our steering power. You cannot push a ship through the billows; but you can turn it with the helm before the current of the winds so that they will drive it. You cannot, with your voice, send your message under the sea; but you can launch it upon the electric stream, where it will bound forward swift as a flash. You cannot move the wheel of your factory with your hands; but you can set it where the river will perform the task in your stead. You cannot cause the seed to grow; but you can cast it into the earth, whose moisture will

nourish it until it returns to you its hundred-fold. So, also, you cannot change yourself by any arbitrary decree; but you may put yourself within the sweep of forces which can transform you, so that you will come forth a new being. If you lack the habit of thought, if your intellect is untrained, you place yourself under teachers and within the strong arms of a school, by which you are constrained to study. If some special faculty, as, for instance, the imagination, is feeble and faulty, you subject it to the reign of the poet, the painter, the musician, until its defects are removed. How important, in view of this truth, is the company with which you are intimate, and the books you read with the greatest attention! But there is a more mighty force than these; and it is of the most momentous importance that you come within the sphere of God's grace, which alone can do that for you which you need to have done. Take a single example, that my meaning may be clear. If anger rages within your heart, you can no more destroy it with a word than Canute could cause the tide to recede at his command: as there is only One whom the waves obey, so there is only One who can still the tempests of the soul; and as the disciples aroused Him with their cries, so should you carry your peril to Him in prayer, and engage in some service that may glorify His name, assured that both His love and His power are pledged for your deliverance, and that He will rebuke the unruly elements, and produce the calm you desire.

Fifth. You should pay jealous attention to the smaller and weaker influences which affect you. Many who

would be shocked by a rude word, who would blush at the thought of any gross impropriety, who would recoil from positive solicitation to evil, fail at last because they do not guard themselves from the patient operation of slight and insidious forces. But, in fact, our characters are formed by these. Sometimes it is otherwise, and the whole being takes shape in a moment; as, when the boy Hannibal swore the awful oath of hatred to Rome, his disposition, his marvellous career, and his melancholy fate were determined immediately. But in general the process is like that by which the roof of a cavern is studded with stalactites: one drop descends after another, and each bears a minute particle of mineral substance which adheres after the water has passed away. The matter thus left behind may be pure as the fluid which held it, or dark as the murky twilight about it. In the one case the rocky needle is white as frost; in the other it is soiled by earthy mixtures, and has little beauty. Even so, the casual words we hear, the daily deeds we permit ourselves to see, the books we toss aside most lightly, the thoughts and feelings of the idle revery, leave a deposit upon the soul either fair or foul. And, since it is from these atoms that you derive your growth, you cannot exercise too great care over their sources and their nature.

Such are some of the general methods by which your character may be formed in fair proportions. It has been said that every person resembles some animal, not only in the features of the face, but in the traits of the disposition; and the kingly lion, the daring eagle, the

velvet-footed fox, and the tortuous serpent are found as frequently in companies of men and women as in the wilds and jungles. But, returning to the figure suggested by the text, we may say with equal truth that every soul resembles some kind of building. There are persons who represent pest-houses: they treasure the faults and misfortunes of mankind; no smile breaks the perpetual gloom of their brows; if they open their ears it is to hear some tale of frailty or misery, and if they open their lips it is to repeat it; they love to echo the groans of the diseased and the sighs of the dying. Some persons are windmills: their arms are always stretching aloft into the thin air of a visionary existence; and the noise of grinding is loud, but the grist is small. Some persons are monuments: they are full of memories; they are garrulous about the past; but they have no present work to perform; their chief task is to mourn for the days that are gone. Some persons are factories: their minds know nothing but busy activity; they have no leisure from morning to night; and they have no care for the amenities of life, which yield but slight reward in silver and gold. Some persons are art-galleries, full of gorgeous fancies and poetic feeling, standing apart from the common walks of mankind. Some persons are museums, stored with curious lore, mysteries to the multitude, but helpful to the few. Some persons are hospitals, in whose ample charities every son and daughter of want finds sympathy and cheer. Some persons are homes: the moment you approach them is one of delight; they remind you of father and mother, and brother and sister;

in their conversation there is the charm of good sense well trained; and you discover nothing too low or too high for your constant appreciation. Some persons are temples: they have received our most holy faith, and it is embedded in their deepest convictions; and they have built upon it characters so pure and so beneficent that you speak of them with reverence, as of a shrine where God dwells; all their strength and grace are consecrated to Heaven; anthems of praise and prayer ascend from their hearts, good angels visit them, and the Holy Spirit chooses them for His abode. What will you be? Behold the many possibilities before you. Make no foolish determination, and rear no walls which you will wish overthrown.

CHARACTER AND REPUTATION.

"Whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price." — 1 PET. iii. 3, 4.

THE Wesleyans once interpreted these verses in the most literal manner, established a censorship over the apparel of the women who united with their societies, forbade all ornaments, and enjoined a plainness of attire that offended the taste. But at present they accord with other Christians, who understand the writer to rebuke vanity and extravagance and display, but not to discourage a proper attention to neatness and even beauty of person. There may be occasions when we should dress with extreme severity, as there are occasions when we put on mourning because its gloom is consonant with our grief, which would make any other clothing a mockery: a season of affliction might render gems and gay garments inappropriate. Thus Tertullian wrote: "Cast off delights in order not to be oppressed by persecution. Arms accustomed to bracelets would

not know how to bear the weight of chains; feet adorned with sandals could not endure fetters; and a head covered with pearls and jewels would leave no room to the sword." In his age of martyrdom the argument was cogent as it was awful. In general, however, we may say that you comply with the Scriptures when you pay your chief attention to the adornment of the soul, and practise moderation in the adornment of the body. The Apostle spoke freely and strongly, not supposing that he would be mistaken, even as also did our Lord when He bade us "take no thought for the morrow," meaning that we should not be too anxious and careful.

But let us look deeper. What is the secret motive which the text rebukes? Those who pay more attention to the adornment of their persons than to the adornment of their hearts, are such as love a good reputation rather than a good character. Your character is constituted by your intrinsic qualities, your reputation by the opinions of others concerning you; your character lies within, your reputation comes from without; your character is your appearance in the eyes of God, your reputation is your appearance in the eyes of man. Usually your character will determine your reputation: yet there are many instances in which the best and noblest win hatred, and pass their lives in the shadows of cruel misconstruction; and many in which those whose hearts are as black as midnight win praise as angels of light. Human judgments are often fallible and shallow; and multitudes take advantage of this circumstance to gain applause by a show of external beauty such as arrests attention and

pleases the fancy. These persons spend on dress the time and means they should devote to self-culture. And they have their reward: they extort the flatteries of the unthinking, for whose approval they array themselves; they cover up with gold and jewels and braided hair the vacuity within; and they escape the disagreeable necessity of fostering dispositions whose excellence they admit, but whose possession would cost them much sincerity and shame and heroic endeavor.

It is not simply in personal adornment, however, that the spirit of the text is violated. All extravagance is a bid for popular applause, an effort to win a reputation which is not based upon character. Dr. Franklin says shrewdly that the eyes of other people, and not our own, lead us into half the expenditures we make. And women are responsible for much of this undue magnificence, since they establish the unwritten laws of society. The husband knows and cares comparatively little about these regulations: he defers at once to the judgment of the wife, and supplies her cheerfully with the means necessary to maintain her position. But he is not to be excused on this account. He is pleased with the results of the pomp: it may be heavy and almost intolerable, but he bears it patiently for the distinction it confers, until, perhaps, financial ruin stares him in the face. Then both have opportunity to reflect with bitterness, and, let us hope, with profit, on the hollowness of the praise they enjoyed, which was but the incense offered to gold by those whose heads were light as their hearts, and whose moral state was so low as to render them indifferent to

the characters, whether good or bad, concealed by the display.

Our methods of educating young women are based too often upon the love of reputation, rather than upon the desire to build the best character. These methods are being reformed by such agencies as Vassar College; yet they are subject still to the criticism of the text, as seeking the adornment rather than the substantial improvement of the pupil. They hang upon her mind a few glittering acquirements, but they do not develop its powers: if she remains long under their influence she may come forth incrusted with a brilliant array of acquisitions, but destitute of preparation for the years of duty and trial before her. Inspect her painting; hear her music: they are mechanical; they are arts that she has learned, and not, as they should be, the unfolding of her nature. Miss Edgeworth makes a fine remark about the heroine of one of her tales: "That the stream of literature had passed over her mind, was apparent only from its fertility." But too often there is no stream, and no fertility: the waters are collected upon the surface, where they lie, a bright and thin expanse, until they evaporate with the lapse of time, leaving no strong and beautiful growth, but a tangle of perplexity and discouragement in the presence of difficulties which were not foreseen. We may sum up our indictment in three counts: first, the methods of education to which young women are subjected contemplate a life of leisure and social display such as few will lead; second, they contemplate the period that precedes marriage, when existence is a charming dream, and

make little provision for the labors and responsibilities that must follow, during which all disguise must fall, and the genuine qualities of the judgment and the heart must decide the happiness or the misery of the household; and, third, they contemplate a temporary reputation for elegant accomplishments, rather than a character whose solidity and sweetness shall outlast the bloom of the complexion, the symmetry of the form, the mellowness of the voice, and the vivacity of youth, and evoke admiration in the actual emergencies which all meet, whether brought up by the rude hands of poverty, or nursed in the lap of wealth.

All affectation is an effort to put on some adornment that shall gain praise. The woman who is guilty of affectation is untrue to her real character in order that she may the better acquire a reputation to which she has no lawful title.. Usually she fails in her effort: she conceals that which is truly admirable in her nature, and does not succeed in the imitation she attempts. Here is a fine illustration from "The Spectator": "The ill effect of it is in none so conspicuous as in the two opposite characters of Cælia and Iras. Cælia has all the charms of person, together with an abundant sweetness of nature, but wants wit, and has a very ill voice; Iras is ugly and ungenteel, but has wit and good sense. If Cælia would be silent, her beholders would adore her; if Iras would talk, her hearers would admire her: but Cælia's tongue runs incessantly, while Iras gives herself silent airs and soft languors, so that it is difficult to persuade one's self that Cælia has beauty, and Iras wit. Each neglects her

own excellence, and is ambitious of the other's character; Iras would be thought to have as much beauty as Cælia, and Cælia as much wit as Iras." A French proverb says: "We are never rendered so ridiculous by qualities which we have, as by those which we aim at." When Cicero asked the oracle at Delphos what course of study he should pursue, the answer was: "Follow nature." If every one would accept this counsel, affectation would be unknown.

In your manners it is possible for you to obey so slavishly the cold rules of a code as to fetter yourself in glittering forms, and hide your genuine character. There are persons who so covet the reputation of being faultless in social observances, that they cultivate these until they themselves are utterly obscured, and every positive trait of their disposition is cut down to the monotonous level of established customs, or studiously muffled from sight in a cloud of polite drapery. We can all respond to the words of Chalmers: "There is a set of people whom I cannot bear, the pinks of fashionable propriety, whose every word is precise, and whose every movement is unexceptionable; but who, though versed in all the categories of polite behavior, have not a particle of soul or cordiality about them. We allow that their manners may be abundantly correct. There may be elegance in every gesture, and gracefulness in every position; not a smile out of place, and not a step that would not bear the measurement of the severest scrutiny. This is all very fine: but what I want is the heart and gayety of social intercourse; the frankness that spreads ease and anima-

tion around it; the eye that speaks affability to all, that chases timidity from every bosom, and tells every one in the company to be confident and happy." The mere lover of a fashionable reputation puts on the customs of society as she would put on a mask; whereas they should be but a veil of gauze, revealing the features of the wearer, even while imparting to them a greater delicacy.

Those who pay chief attention to reputation are troubled with fears of what the world may say, and are deterred by cowardice from the highest achievements; but those who cultivate their characters as of supreme importance, while not deaf to the voice of public opinion, and while keenly alive to criticism, attain an independence and sublimity of life unknown to others. You may come to exist only in the breath of compliments, and to spread your sails and steer your course so as ever to catch the perfumed breezes of flattery. Yet what can be more ignoble? Augustine confesses that he was never quite satisfied with a sermon he had preached until some one had commended it; and then a feeling of shame took possession of him, that he was so dependent for comfort upon lips of flesh. It is a weakness common to humanity, but dangerous to those who indulge it. When Whitefield was praised he said: "Take care of fire: I carry powder about me." Women are not less susceptible than men to an influence so full of peril; and you should guard yourself against the miserable passion for applause which may lead you to speak and act merely with reference to the verdict of observers, and to cultivate those gifts whose exhibition will dazzle and charm, like gold

and pearl and costly apparel, rather than the noble qualities of your mind and heart, which alone can lead you to a brave and beneficent career.

A woman who makes reputation rather than character the theme of her thought and the object of her ambition, admires in others the mere decorations which she has desired for herself. If several suitors ask her hand in marriage, she will prefer the one who makes the finest display of person or of riches, regardless of his disposition and habits. If she is called to select a circle of intimate associates, she will act on the same principle, and will surround herself with persons of the most glittering qualities, without religion and without heart. If she goes to the house of God, and hears His Word, she chooses a church and a ministry with reference to the lustre they will reflect upon her. Would you know the result? Lift the curtain of privacy from her splendid abode. Her husband is not there: as she had no affection to give him, he has long since learned that home is the coldest place in the world. Her children regard her not, and turn from her fretful rebukes to the arms of the more faithful nurse. No friend crosses her threshold: there are ceremonious calls, and at times there are brilliant assemblies, but all tender intimacies are unknown. And, as in her life she has no love, so in her death she has no consolation: she has chosen the pomps and vanities which are praised by mankind, and she has forgotten to adorn her soul with those virtues and graces which alone can comfort us in the last hour and assure us a happy eternity.

Now, it is very necessary to care jealously for our reputation. "A good name is better than great riches." Without it, you would be most miserable. It is not in vain that your Creator has placed in your hearts a sensitiveness to both praise and blame which men do not know. He would have you avoid every thing that can bring upon you just reproach, so that amidst the sin and folly of the world our wounded faith may find refuge in thoughts of our mothers, our wives, our sisters, our daughters, whose excellences no enemy, even, would call in question. But this disposition, like every other good gift, may be abused. If properly employed, it will lead you to be, and not to seem; to cultivate your character as the only basis of a reputation worthy of your desire; to seek the approval of God for "the hidden man of the heart," the thoughts, the emotions, the aspirations, which none but He can mark.

When you pervert this motive, and become greedy of mere applause, forgetful of your soul, you miss that which you covet: in the opinion of those whose judgment is of any importance, you are condemned; nay, even the servile flatterer who pleases you with his adulation reads your secret vanity, and smiles as he feeds the flame with his words; and could you perceive his thought, as he perceives yours, you would spurn him from your presence, and blush that you had attracted such as he. On the other hand, she who cares chiefly for her character will have usually all the admiration she can desire; and it will come from the honest lips of the noblest; or, if no one else should discover her faithfulness, God would pro-

claim it at the Last Day. When the traveller stands upon the roof of the cathedral in Milan, around him rise a myriad pinnacles, some shooting far above his head, and others terminating below him; and all are crowned with statues. Surveying the gorgeous structure of white marble, and its maze of finials, you seem to be on some mountain-top where the ground beneath your feet, and the forest about you, are covered with frost. You are struck with the splendor of the material, and equally with the exquisite beauty of the workmanship. But what of those parts which you cannot see, the remote and hidden surfaces? Surely these have no elaborate finish, since the artisan would not care to decorate that which no one would be apt to inspect. Since you cannot go to them, take your telescope, and draw them near to you. As you gaze through your glass at the most distant and inaccessible points, you discover no flaw. The builders did not suppose that any human eye would scan that which they made. They wrought with the conviction that God beheld them, and not for the praise of men; and their simple faithfulness rendered the most concealed portions of the fabric as perfect as those which all persons may view. So should you toil in the formation of your character. Keep yourself pure, not simply in name, but also in deed. Pray to be cleansed from secret faults. Labor with the consciousness that Heaven looks down upon you, even when you are withdrawn from earth, and admires the care you bestow upon your heart, or abhors you if you neglect it, though you may cover yourself with that which wins the notice of the world.

All false religions direct your attention chiefly to external rites or acts; and Christianity is distinguished from these by its care for your soul. There are men here in America who stand up in the name of God, and bid you observe certain ceremonies as the principal means of salvation. There are men also who bid you keep yourselves from all gross external faults, and assure you, on this condition, a happy eternity. But the moment you open your Bibles you find another language, which pierces to your inmost being. "Keep thy heart with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of life." "Repent." "Believe." "Love." These are the elementary commands of the Gospel; and they point to your emotions, your thoughts, your will, and require that you look first to these. And they assure you, that, having a regenerate nature, your external conduct will evince it. Nor are you left without assistance in the great task to which the Scriptures call you: indeed, all you need do is to open the gates of your soul in sincere prayer, and invite the Saviour to enter. If He comes, He will set all things in order. He will break the chains in which you have bound your conscience, and will lead it once more to its proper throne, and will place in its hand the sceptre you have sought to destroy. He will melt the frosts by which your affections are repressed, and will cause them to spring up at His feet, a Paradise of fragrance. He will quicken sloth and indolence, so that they shall no longer impede your holiest resolutions. At His voice prejudice and selfishness shall flee, and hide themselves in shame. And, having accomplished this beneficent revolution in your

character, He will cause it to appear in your daily words and deeds. Alas for the folly that would substitute for this adornment of the hidden man the braided hair, the gold, the apparel, of empty forms, or of a mere harmless existence, influenced by no zeal for God or for humanity!

It is possible in this life to possess a reputation which does not correspond with your character; but the Day approaches when character and reputation shall be one; and those who have been accused falsely shall be known as innocent, and those who have enjoyed credit for good that they did not possess shall be detected and exposed. The secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed. You have walked through a forest after a storm in winter, and have remarked how difficult it was to determine the species of the various trees. Here and there was an evergreen that proclaimed its lineage; but for the most part the branches had cast their foliage, and had taken, instead, a panoply of snow and sleet, so that you could scarcely distinguish, by the uncertain indications of the form, the oak from the maple. But you have trodden the same wooded paths in the spring, when the sun shone brightly, and called forth the life of ash and chestnut and hickory, decking each in the leafy symbols of its kind. And we see one another in this world but imperfectly, interpreted by our words and deeds. It is true that sometimes we meet persons whose souls are so plainly revealed that no one can doubt for a moment their purity or their baseness. It is true that in the great majority of instances a protracted intimacy with another enables us to determine the disposition with some accuracy. But in

general, for the full manifestation of ourselves and of those we know, we must await the last great trial: then shall our souls be unfolded before the universe. No reputation will avail us; nothing but a character washed in the blood of Christ and adorned with the graces imparted by the Holy Spirit can endure the test. Suffer me to beseech you that you be prepared for the ordeal which so surely and so swiftly approaches.

SELFISHNESS.

"In her tongue is the law of kindness." — PROV. xxxi. 26.

THE literature of the world cannot furnish another description of womanhood so attractive as that contained in the chapter from which the text is taken: it is matchless. But we should feel that it was defective, were the element of generosity omitted; we should fear that this brisk and capable housewife, whose candle goes not out by night, who rises before the morning star, who looks well to the ways of her household, who considers a field and buys it, might prove, on close acquaintance, somewhat masculine and harsh. But when we are told that she does her husband good, and not evil, all the days of her life, that she stretches out her hand to the poor, and that the law of kindness is in her tongue, we join with the writer in pronouncing her price to be far above rubies. She is unselfish both in her deeds and in her words. There are many who cover a cold and grasping disposition with honeyed speech, and there are many who will do you a favor grimly and with curt phrases: she makes her speech

doubly precious by the deeds which accompany it, and her deeds doubly acceptable by the gracious language she employs. I present the unselfishness of this ideal woman for your imitation.

In his "Seven Lamps of Architecture," Ruskin devotes the first chapter to "The Lamp of Sacrifice." There is a difference, he says, between building and architecture. Building has reference to the utility of the structure; architecture, to its beauty. Building, moreover, involves no sacrifice, since in the utility of the structure the owner finds his reward for its cost; but in architecture there is sacrifice, for there is great expenditure that cannot be refunded in coin; the exactness of proportion, the symmetry, the poetic feeling, the elaborate tracery, gratify the taste, but confer no riches. We have stronger motives, however, in commending the spirit of sacrifice than those which this great critic pleads. He has shown that in architecture it is pleasing to God as it is to man. In the formation of character it is not only pleasing, but useful and necessary. There can be neither attractiveness nor goodness in its absence. The selfish soul is not only hideous, but fiendish and destructive.

While I urge you to cultivate unselfishness as the most important trait of a noble character, I have some fear, that, though I may assist those whose dispositions are marred by selfishness, I may lead those who are really generous to strive for a more perfect abnegation of self than is demanded, or indeed innocent. Let me say, therefore, at the outset, that unselfishness has its limitations, beyond which it is wrong for you to go. There are

women who neglect that which God has commanded in His Word, because strong and irreligious natures oppose them, counting upon their known desire to defer to others. There are few instances in which the wife ought not to give way at once, and with cheerfulness, to the lightest wishes of the husband; yet there are wives who surrender too much to the systematic tyranny of their husbands, and so encourage a spirit of oppression which, if met firmly and kindly, would disappear. The mother may yield all her time and pleasure to her children, with the conviction that by her example she will lead them to a life of similar sacrifice; but she ruins those she is most anxious to benefit. She teaches them an exaggerated estimate of their own importance, and adds to their selfishness and thoughtless cruelty. Her proper course is to toil for them so far as may be necessary to their real prosperity, and also to inculcate a genuine regard for her convenience and happiness, such as shall become a habit of self-forgetfulness throughout their lives. Let the second commandment be your guide: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." When you go beyond this, becoming wiser than the law of Jehovah, you are in danger of surrendering not only your rights, but your duties, and of injuring not only yourself, but the very persons to whom you concede more than Heaven commands.

Generosity is more natural to woman than to man. If she brought sin into the world, nobly has she sought to assuage the anguish it produces. If man eats his bread in the sweat of his face, her tender hands wipe away the

drops. If disease preys upon his body, she is his nurse, winning back to his cheek the roses of health by her tireless assiduity and her skilful care. Or, if he returns to the dust out of which he was taken, she stands near in the hour of his dissolution, and cheers him to the last with a ministry as tender as that of angels. He bears no burden that she does not share, and feels no grief that she does not alleviate. It is very unusual for her to cherish selfishness in its grosser forms; but it takes many disguises, and in refined and insidious shapes may find lodgement in her heart. It is my purpose now to trace it in some of its more deceitful aspects.

First. Your sympathies may be inverted, so that, instead of leading you to assist the suffering, they shall keep you from scenes of woe by the distress they give you, if you yield selfishly to its dictates. Mrs. Sandford has presented this thought in admirable language: "False sensibility should be as much guarded against as want of feeling, for the one usually terminates in the other. It is therefore wrong to nurse any sentiment which spends itself in words, and much more to allow a display of sympathy greater than what is actually experienced. In the susceptibility of early life, a morbid state of feeling may be induced, which, while it evaporates in lamentation, indisposes to serious effort. Every sight and scene of distress, every pathetic tale, excites a movement. Sighs and tears are at command. 'But alas!' it is said, 'what can we do? we are so weak, so sensitive, so much overcome by scenes of distress!' And what does such sensibility end in? In banishing from the thoughts whatever

occasions pain, and causing us to sit at ease amid our own comforts." Persons who turn away thus from the hunger of the poor, the bedsides of the sick, and the funerals of the dead, in order to escape the disturbance of their emotions, uniformly consider themselves models of tenderness. Are not their sensibilities so deep as to be painful? Are not their sympathies overwhelming? Yes: they are like the miser's hoard, which he hugs to his bosom and refuses to the children of want, a wealth which might cause the world to rejoice, but which decays in idleness. If you have cherished this delusive form of selfishness, may God spare you the misery you deserve; and when you fall under afflictions such as you have neglected to soothe, may He be more merciful to you than you have been to those whom you have observed in the same unhappy circumstances!

There is another insidious form of selfishness which is directly opposite to the one just mentioned. There are persons who consider an instance of suffering or misfortune as a kind of luxury. It was remarked long since that those romances which close with a pathetic tragedy are more popular than those which terminate in the general happiness of all the characters. The daily papers sell with most rapidity when they announce in startling head-lines some horror that curdles the blood: and it need not be of a nature in which the public ought to take an interest, as a battle or a famine; it may be a brawl, a duel, a murder, an instance of domestic infelicity. There are persons to whom a funeral procession is more exhilarating than an army with banners; and to whom the

sickness or death of a friend will furnish food for the most satisfactory meditations for many days. To these people the earth would prove a most wretched abode, did it contain no miseries. They are by no means destitute of feeling, nor are they slow to help where their assistance is needed; but they impart their sympathy and their activities upon any occasion of grief, as if it were a scene of tender rapture. Mrs. Stowe, in her "Pearl of Orr's Island," gives us a good illustration in Miss Roxy, who is always ready to succor the sick and the dying. On one occasion she prepares for burial the body of a woman who was drowned; and she comes forth from her task, saying that she would not ask to see a better-looking corpse, that after receiving proper care it appeared really beautiful, and that when it should be placed in the coffin it would be lovely. Perhaps a person of greater refinement would not be so frank; but among those of higher culture there may be the same disposition to regard the calamities of others as subjects of artistic criticism and pathetic delight, such as you feel when you survey the Dying Gladiator or the Laocoön.

Still another insidious form of selfishness is that craving for sympathy which leads us to parade our slightest pains before others; to cast upon the household or the social circle any gloom we may have; indeed, to overrate or to invent griefs, and to feel hurt if we do not receive constant commiseration. There are persons who take it amiss if you congratulate them on their good health: they have maladies which you should regard so tenderly that you could not use such language. The happiest

place I know on earth is a home in which a Christian woman suffers. It is radiant with her cheer. Even little children love it. There are shadows; but there are sunbeams scattered everywhere among them, as beneath the boughs of a forest when the sky is clear. Emerson, in his "Conduct of Life," has a chapter on Behavior, a few sentences of which will be in place here: "Special precepts are not to be thought of: the talent of well-doing contains them all. Every hour will show a duty as paramount as my whim just now; and yet I will write it, that there is one topic peremptorily forbidden to all well-bred, to all rational mortals, namely, their distempers. If you have not slept, or if you have slept, or if you have headache, or sciatica, or leprosy, or thunderstroke, I beseech you by all angels to hold your peace, and not pollute the morning, to which all the housemates bring serene and pleasant thoughts, by corruption and groans." Perhaps this is too sweeping; yet you should beware of taxing needlessly the pity of your friends. There are few wells that you may not empty by constant draughts; and you use the waters only when you are athirst. There are few hearts, however great, with tenderness so copious that perpetual needless exactions may not exhaust it. Your real sufferings will not fail to evoke sympathy, even should they be multiplied a hundred-fold; but artificial or exaggerated griefs, created or magnified by the fancy in order to gain compassion, will turn from you, in the end, the very persons for whose love and care you are most solicitous.

Nearly akin to the foregoing is the subtle selfishness of

love. Your affections may be of such a sort, that, instead of seeking the happiness of their object, they will demand an excess of blandishment which few can give without hypocrisy, and will lead you to fretfulness if you do not receive it. Let me turn once more to Mrs. Sandford: "An over-wrought sensibility may prove a prolific source of misery to women. The suspicion of unkindness or of indifference in others is like a wound, perpetually exasperating itself; and the peevishness and discontent which it engenders are the most likely means of exciting the very disesteem of which it complains. Nothing is more teasing to the objects of regard than this sort of temper. It is perpetually harassing them with imaginary jealousies, brooding over them with suspicion, and exercising upon them a surveillance which can scarcely fail to weary and in time destroy the sincerest affection. And although it may be glossed over as an amiable weakness, or claim to be excused as excess of feeling, self-esteem and self-love are in fact its sources."

Again, there is an impulsive generosity which serves as a mask behind which selfishness hides. There are few so cold, so passionate, so exacting, that they have not periods of relaxation, when their frosty and crabbed nature relents, and they pour forth the words and confer the gifts of affection. And these lovers of self, surveying such instances of momentary generosity, believe themselves saints and martyrs. The very rarity of the occasions may render them deceptive: they are so unusual as to seem stupendous when they occur, and their memory dwells in the greedy mind as a patent of nobility and

a title to admiration. Disraeli has sketched with a master-hand the mother of Lord Byron, whose selfishness took the form of vulgar irritation against her son. Even the claims of the courtesy due to her hosts or her guests could not check her abuse. She had become so accustomed to the indulgence of her anger that it boiled over on the most unsuitable occasions; and then subsided, like the waters of an intermittent spring, while murmurs of affection succeeded the accents of rage. No wonder that, inheriting the disposition and brought up under the care of such a parent, he became the willing slave of his appetites, and dragged his splendid genius in the dust. Like her, also, he was too selfish to restrain the most bitter impulse of the moment, though he knew its expression would wound like a knife; and, like her, he had periods of generosity, when no service was too great for him to render to one whom the next hour he would wither with his scorn. And there may be other kinds of selfishness, for which we make a poor atonement by occasional moments of goodness.

A not uncommon form of selfishness is that of the thoughtless person, who does not intend to injure or hurt, but who is so engaged in her meditations or her work as to forget those around her. The sin is one of omission, and not of commission; but it is not to be excused on this account. It is not so heinous, indeed, as that of the woman who plots coldly for herself and her family, willing to crush out any who stand in her way; but, as it is the source of much annoyance and pain, it merits severe condemnation. You have no right to be

so engrossed with your own affairs: on the contrary, the benevolence which leads us to speak and act in such a way as to avoid wounding our neighbors, and as to confer gladness and consolation on all who meet us, is as much a duty as the charity that moves us to open our purse for the relief of hunger or cold. The ideal woman is like a flower that draws from the earth and the air the sustenance to build up its petals, and at the same time exhales a delicate perfume which renders existence delightful to those who breathe near it. Indeed, the difference between one who does not attract us and one whose atmosphere is charming, is not that the first is plain and the second beautiful, but rather that the first is careless of those with whom she associates, while the second makes their happiness her study and derives from it her pleasure, and, while maintaining a proper reserve and dignity, manifests in every accent and action her regard for others.

Then there is a selfishness of the will. In man, it is manifest and bold; it shows itself in obstinacy and truculence: but in woman it is more subtle, and therefore more apt to escape detection. She may be as determined as any man to have her way, but she is more apt to seek it by finesse. She does not resist opposition as the oak withstands the blast, upright, tossing its arms, and shouting in defiance: she meets it as the willow meets the storm, bending before it for a season, to spring up again when its force is somewhat spent. And often, where man would be driven from his position, she holds hers, as, after the oak is uprooted by the tempest, the willow

rises from it unharmed. She may deceive herself, and suppose that she yields when she only stoops to conquer; she may mistake suppleness for a generous deference to others. If you have a tenacity of purpose that leads you to hold fast your desires, even when they are shown to be unnecessary or unwise, and to follow your own path from the mere indisposition to change, you are selfish, though you have cultivated all the arts of complaisance in order to cover your pertinacity.

There is, once more, a selfishness of the most subtle form, which makes us jealous for those who are intimately associated with us, and forgetful of others more distant. There have been parents so greedy of money for their children as to give up their lives to its acquisition, and defraud all whom they could overreach. Many patriots have loved their country so well as to advocate the subjugation of neighboring peoples for its aggrandizement; and, in this sense, Napoleon was devoted to France, for whose glory he cherished a sincere passion. It is possible to become interested in a church or a political party so as to labor, and if need be to die, for it, and also to use unjust means for its advancement. The world may admire such careers, but God perceives that they proceed from selfishness. It is only because those for whom we sacrifice so much are related to us, and in fact constitute a part of ourselves, that we are willing to violate our conscience to promote their supposed interests. Whenever our affections are perverted thus, so that we make them our apology for sin, we may be assured that they are but a refined expression of our self-worship.

Unsuspected selfishness obtrudes itself, also, into our religious life, as Satan stole into Eden. There are Christians, so called, who are merely anxious for themselves, and comparatively little interested in the fate of their neighbors; like the butler of Pharaoh, who, so soon as he was set at large, forgot the imprisoned Joseph. There are Christians, so called, whose sole idea of religion is an existence of emotions, without much regard to impenitent souls; and, as Nero made music while Rome burned, so they love to

> "Sit and sing themselves away
> To everlasting bliss,"

heedless of the perishing world, and of the sacrifices of time and toil and money necessary to its salvation. There are many whose whole conception of a sermon is that it should be an entertainment, and whose idea of a Sabbath service is that it should be such as cannot disturb or alarm the most slumberous conscience. Now, anxiety for your own destiny, and rapturous joys, and the pleasure produced by eloquence and the decorum of public worship are not to be disparaged. But true godliness is far more than these: above them should tower, like a burning mountain, your zeal for mankind. The unselfishness which should mark your piety is finely set forth in an old legend of a saint who prayed with such faith that the Lord appeared to him in person. In the midst of the sweet conversation which ensued, there came a message from some needy beggar asking help. How could the good man turn from the presence of his Saviour

to answer the disagreeable importunity of such a stranger? The struggle was sharp; but the sense of duty triumphed, and that which seemed the very bliss of Heaven was surrendered to relieve the necessities of earth. When the holy man returned to his devotions, his Redeemer was still visible; and with a radiant face the vision said: "Hadst thou remained, I must have departed."

It may be hard for us to surrender our preferences, our tastes, our ways, for the sake of others; and if there were no cross in a noble life, there would be no crown at its close. But, indeed, no unselfish thought or word or deed shall fail of its reward. It is told that Elizabeth of Hungary, whose kindness to the poor and the sick was unbounded, once brought to her palace a leprous child, and, because there was no place besides, laid it in her own bed. Her husband, hearing what was done, and being somewhat displeased, came in, and drew down the cover to see if the object concealed there was indeed as loathsome as he had been told. But, lo! instead of the diseased and festering body, he saw his Saviour radiant with glory; and he turned away awe-smitten, yet glad. We know who said: "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these, ye have done it unto me."

And if at any time the burden of an unselfish life shall grow too heavy, the same blessed Being will help us to bear it. Another legend tells how Elizabeth of Hungary once brought her cloak full of loaves to the poor who fed upon her daily bounty. Her husband met her in the way, and, being amazed that she should bear so great a load, looked within to see what it was, and found only flowers.

They were light as they were fragrant to the lovely woman who carried them; they were weighty with new life to those who longed for her coming. So, ever, the duties of an unselfish disposition, if we take them up, grow easy in our hands; the Master works some mysterious miracle to render them as agreeable to us as they are helpful to those to whom we minister.

THE LOVE OF HOME.

"Keepers at home." — TITUS ii. 5.

PAUL exhorts Titus to teach the aged women the precepts of Christianity which relate to their sex, in order that they may instruct the younger "to be sober, to love their husbands, to love their children, to be discreet, chaste, keepers at home, good, obedient to their own husbands." All these qualities are involved in that love of home which is our topic; but I have selected for my text one phrase, "keepers at home," because it directs the attention at once to the subject. Literally, the words are, "guardians of the house;" and they express the watchful interest which a true woman takes in all the members of her family and in the household goods, an interest known only to those whose affections are centred in home, and whose lives are devoted to its happiness. Let us consider some things that tend to destroy this attachment.

Many young women are accustomed from girlhood to think that enjoyment is to be found chiefly outside the domestic group; in the throngs of fashion, in the ball-

room, at the concert, at the theatre. The ultimate effect is stated well by the Rev. William G. Eliot, D.D.: "She whose happiness depends more and more upon the excitement of company, who gives the greater part of her time to trifles light as air, and expends money as though it cost no labor to earn it, is in a very bad progress of self-education. The quiet of home gradually becomes distasteful; the mind is almost incapacitated for serious thought; habits of extravagance are confirmed, and false notions of gentility introduced, altogether affording not very good promise of a life of industry, economy, self-denial, and other homely virtues, without which home itself becomes miserable. A single season of such preparation is a permanent injury to the character; a succession of them for several years is enough to ruin almost any. A great deal of the unhappiness of married life is to be ascribed to this cause; for the wife must either make a complete change from the previous mode of living, and in the sources of her enjoyment, a change which, if not compulsory, requires more strength of character than the majority possess, or she must continue in the same habits of pleasure-seeking, thereby neglecting her most important duties, and exerting a bad influence over those she loves." Her unwise friends may say: "Let her be happy: it will be time for her to grow more sober when she assumes the obligations of marriage." But suppose that her tastes become vitiated; that when she engages to make a cheerful home for another, she finds herself not only unfitted for the task, but indisposed to it; and that she draws after her, in the feverish maze

of her favorite pursuits, the husband, miserable man! who longs for domestic quietude in vain. I have watched the young robin while it fluttered its half-fledged wings over its nest until it threw itself out, and fell upon the earth, unable to fly. Moved by the clamor of its parents, I have replaced it, only to see it fling itself again to the ground, helpless, and exposed to every beast of prey. One moment of license had given it a passionate disdain of the narrow limits in which it had been confined under the brooding of its mother's bosom. Thus human beings, as well as the birds, but with less of reason for their choice, may become so enamoured of the world as to despise the quiet joys of the household. Our children should be permitted a proper indulgence in the innocent amusements of society; but they should be restrained from excess, and taught that the family-circle is the scene of the greatest pleasures.

Equally, a life of mere worldly pleasures after marriage unfits the young wife for the love and enjoyment of home. Here is a fine saying of Dr. Eliot: "If the young wife is prepared by the graces of her character, as well as of her person, to make the quiet hours pass pleasantly; if her taste leads her to find her own happiness at home, her husband will soon learn that his happiness is also there. The pleasures of the world would be rarely sought, because they would not be enjoyed. Life would become more rational, not less cheerful. It would take a higher tone, with which the dissipation of fashionable life would produce an unpleasant discord, to be introduced, perhaps, occasionally, as a discord into music,

that it may be speedily resolved by a return to the social harmony." It may be added, that when we resort to other places for the music whose harmony most delights us, we make dissonance at home. The composer can always find a discord with which to relieve the monotony of his strain; mere negligence will produce it: but the harmony is the result of much study and care. Nothing but ardent devotion to the home can render it sweet with the concord of its inmates; while but a little neglect is necessary to fill it with sharp and jarring voices, and to drive into the cold world those who should make it musical with the chorus of their affection.

An undue fondness for admiration may destroy your love of home, not only by leading you into the world to win its deceitful smiles, but by causing you to make your abode too fine for daily use, a scene of display, sacred to the visitor, and not to be desecrated by the familiar feet of husband and children. This is not a vice confined exclusively to fashionable life; but many in the humblest circumstances close the larger portion of the house except on those rare occasions when it is thrown open to the admiration of comparative strangers, and exclude the wholesome sunbeams from those parts which are inhabited, lest the upholstery should fade and fail to attract the attention of any who may enter the door. There is perpetual constraint; there are shadows that never flee; and there is feeble health engendered by an atmosphere from which the day is banished: but all this can be endured more patiently than the slightest soiling or ageing of furniture kept not for use but for ostentation.

The Greeks represented the regions of departed spirits as a world to which but a feeble glimmer penetrated: there the dead were imprisoned in the twilight, ever regretting the fairer climes from which an unhappy fate had driven them, and ever longing to return. Some residences are as hushed, as dim, as dismal, and as potent to inspire the inmates with the desire of escape. To the members of the family, the abode where they should be free and joyous is an awful place; and they cross its threshold as solemnly as you would enter an Eastern mosque, before whose portal you must put off your shoes, and in whose precincts your voice must be subdued to a reverential murmur. Women who make such an abode as this do not love their home: they have an abode, but not a home; they appreciate more highly the praise which its appearance wins from the thoughtless than the happiness of those whose welfare they should consider as of the first importance. The home is a spot where all due order, propriety, and economy may dwell without imposing tyrannical restraints; a realm whose queen is most delighted when those over whom she reigns cast aside within its borders the cares they must bear without; a refuge from many formalities imposed by an artificial society.

The love of home is sometimes enfeebled or destroyed by the habit of confiding its secrets to persons outside its limits. I would not have you confine your sympathies to the narrow circle of your immediate household: on the contrary, I admire the eulogy pronounced upon a noble woman of the last century by Fordyce: "When, in the course of a few years, her extraordinary character com-

mended her to the choice of a man of singular worth and good fortune, she did not, with the selfishness common on such occasions, forget her mother or the family she had left behind her; but continued, with the cordial concurrence of her husband, to manifest her filial and sisterly regards in the most effectual manner. She was not one of those narrow-souled women who no sooner step into a house of their own, than they seem to have all their affections and ideas absorbed in their new conditions, relinquishing at once the best companions of their youth, dropping the pen of friendly correspondence, and shrinking up into a little wretched circle of anxieties that exclude every liberal sentiment and every enlarged connection." But while you should reach out beyond your home, increasing the number of your companions, and diffusing afar the light of your friendly influence, you should remember that every family is a sacred enclosure, a hallowed shrine, having sins, cares, anxieties, joys, that can be told only to God, and that must be guarded from the intrusion of the most intimate associates. As the Temple of old opened its hospitable courts to every comer, and yet had a Most Holy Place which the High Priest only could enter, so should the household, while welcoming all who desire to share its cheer, have penetralia from which the most endeared, if they do not belong to it, are excluded. I have read of a young wife who set apart one room into which none went except herself and her husband: it was the most cheerful of all; the softest chairs invited to repose; the fairest pictures adorned its walls; the warmest fire shone in its grate.

Perhaps it was used but little; but in any case it was a vivid symbol, representing ever to her mind the sacredness of the relation into which her marriage had introduced her. It was the invention of a fond but romantic nature, an expedient which you would not care to imitate. But there should be such an apartment in your heart and in your life. If you love your home, your better instincts will lead you thus to guard it; but the whispers which make it common to those who are without begin in a low estimate of its sanctity, destroy its happiness, and render it a scene of estrangement and discord, to which you are drawn, if at all, only by motives of custom and decency, and not by your ardent inclinations.

The love of home, with the happiness which should cheer the domestic circle, is sometimes destroyed by a mistake of the opposite kind, by antipathy to your husband's relatives, as painful to him as to you. He, too, may be hostile to yours; and in that case the misery of each is doubled. I will not maintain that there is never any occasion for such a feeling: it may be that we who are parents, when we send our children from our arms, trusting them to other care than our own, and return desolate to our hearthstones, harbor a certain jealousy which provokes that of those with whom they have made alliances; we may doubt their apparent happiness, and try too eagerly to pierce beneath the surface, and learn whether its foundations are firm; we may seek to indulge our former custom of control after the sceptre has vanished from our hands; and we may continue our habit of unrestrained criticism, uttering our praise and our blame

with a freedom neither discreet nor innocent. When we think of those we have surrendered, a tempest of conflicting emotions rages in the breast; joy and sadness break forth in smiles and tears; and it may be that we do not set a watch on our lips, but abandon ourselves too easily to our regrets, our hopes, our grief, our fondness. When our offspring have passed from us, though we ourselves have given them away with our blessing, and they have gone with light hearts, our pangs may wring from us that which it were better that we smothered in silence. Should you not have patience? Could you behold your darlings parted from the shore on some voyage to other lands, never to return, without sensations strong enough to break down all the barriers of your resolution, though the sea were glass, and the ship the pride of the waters? But while, as a parent, I make these concessions, do not suppose that I grant very much. By a little forbearance and tact you may win the esteem of those who are too often distrusted and repelled. I find these golden sentences in a book which few of you have read: "It is gratifying to the young husband to know that his bride is liked, especially by his own friends. With reference, indeed, to these, it will most likely be her wish, as it is her duty, to endeavor to gain their esteem. She will not desire to separate her husband from them, or in any way to diminish his regard for them; but, considering how valuable true friends are, will rather strengthen the bond, and will conciliate their interest for herself, as one identified with the object of their mutual affection. She will desire to adopt her husband's friends as her friends, and

his family as her family; and to render to his relations, according to their several claims, that duty and deference which will make them feel that they have not lost, but gained, a member. The disposition in families ordinarily is to welcome, with kindness and with interest, the new claimant to their protection and love. It will, in most cases, be her own fault if that kindness diminishes. But if she receives their advances with indifference; if she so engrosses her husband as to alienate him from ties that once were the nearest; if, in hospitality or in other little matters of attention, she shows a marked preference to her own kindred; if the counsel of her second parents, and the proffered love of the circle into which she has been ingrafted, are evidently little valued, is it surprising that favor on their part should be withdrawn, or that it should even be converted into coldness and distrust?" If I were addressing young men on this subject, I would say to them, as I say to you, that the mother-in-law is not the ogress you have seen portrayed in French epigrams and witticisms. There is no heart more tender than hers, and no hand more ready to assist. In the various emergencies of life, in financial perplexities, in removals, in sickness, she hovers near, eager to aid, and tremulous lest she be deemed intrusive. Repel not her anxiety; suspect not her love: while preserving the sacredness of your household secrets, open your heart to her, and she will confer upon you the large gift of her maternal affections. Naomi was a mother-in-law, and Ruth a daughter-in-law.

Many homes are rendered unhappy because the young

couple commence their married life on a basis of romance rather than of common-sense. You should remember the fate of Icarus: his father, before they began their adventurous journey through the air, warned him to fly low over the surface of the waters; but the rash youth, rejoicing in the might of his wings, mounted on high until he drew too near the sun, whose beams melted the wax of which they were composed, when the feathers fell off, and he plunged headlong into the ocean, and perished. Soar not too far at first into the aërial regions of sentiment, lest you be dashed down. There are many things in domestic life that may offend a romantic disposition; while all just anticipations of a sober mind are exceeded. For example: however fond the husband may be, he is no longer the suitor. Let me quote the words of another: "The sooner that a woman can divest herself of any unreasonable expectation which the devotion of a lover may have excited, the greater the probability of her securing permanent attachment. Courtship is a dream from which it is better to awake voluntarily than to be reluctantly roused. It is better to return to ordinary habits, to the sober and calm fulfilment of daily business, in the place assigned by duty, than to cherish an artificial excitement, and cling to a false position." Another circumstance of a prosaic character is that the young wife is much in solitude; and there is danger that she will establish a habit difficult to conquer, and pernicious if not broken. She may sink into listless apathy and idleness, or she may "flutter about from house to house to get rid of time." Let me read again from this book:

"It not unfrequently happens that a young married woman is oftener alone than she has previously been accustomed to be, and that she misses the family circle with which she has hitherto been surrounded. Let not this, however, depress her spirits, or render her too dependent on her husband for entertainment. Let it least of all lead her to seek, too frequently, relief in company. One of the first things she should learn is to be happy in solitude, to find there occupation for herself; and to prove to her husband, that however she may enjoy social intercourse, and especially desire his presence, she needs not either a sister or a friend to entertain her when he is away." If the wife, owing to either of these causes, or to any other, shows that she is weary of her home, and that her romantic sentiments are not satisfied with its prosaic routine of duties and crosses, the husband too will find it a dull place, and may wander from it; but, if her face smiles with the testimony of her contentment, he will delight in its rest and cheer.

A prayerless household knows not the strongest love of home. Even among the heathen, each family has its deity to which daily supplications are addressed; and it is only in lands of great enlightenment that religion is wholly excluded from any domestic circle. "A house without a roof," says Bushnell, "would scarcely be a more indifferent home than a family unsheltered by God's friendship, and the sense of being always rested in His providential care and guidance." One of the noblest Christian women of Philadelphia was distinguished for her hospitality to ministers of the Gospel, entertaining

them often with pleasure; and when some one remarked it, she replied: "I want the prayers of good people for my home." The house into which Jehovah enters is happy indeed: "The blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich; and he addeth no sorrow therewith." The family altar is precious not only as the spot from which the incense of our praise and our prayer ascends to Heaven, but as the place to which Heaven sends its bounty in return; and if our eyes were opened to see, we should behold angels trooping around it burdened with gifts. Have you one in your home? Then are you happier there than before its erection. Did you once possess it, and did you suffer its fires to die and its gold to grow dim, and did you at length cast it out? Then are you miserable indeed; and in your secret soul you confess your error. Or have you never made your abode a sanctuary of worship? Then have you yet to learn that which best unites the household, stills the fretful voice of petty irritations, smooths the brow of care, and, in short, produces a society on earth so intimate, so kind, so helpful, so holy, that heaven has no other symbol as vivid.

But I weary you, and must close. The best wish which I can express for your temporal welfare is that you may know the delights of a true home. This fine saying is from Hare: "To Adam, Paradise was home: to the good among his descendants, home is Paradise." Heaven is presented to us as a home: in one of his most glowing passages, the Apostle Paul writes to the Corinthians: "Knowing that while at home in the body we are absent

from the Lord, we are confident and well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord." And if I were disposed to curse you, my most bitter malediction upon your earthly lot would be the prayer that you may be without a home. Poe said that the most sorrowful word in our language is "nevermore;" and Whittier sings, —

> "Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
> The saddest are these: 'It might have been!'"

But there is one more dreary still: it is "homeless." What a dirge of sorrow there is in Hood's simple lines:

> "Oh! it was pitiful:
> Near a whole city full,
> Home she had none."

The bands of those armies in which Swiss mercenaries are employed are not permitted to play the "Ranz des Vaches," the favorite melody of the Alps, lest the mountaineer be cast into hopeless melancholy by the strains of his native country, or be led by his home-sickness to desert his standard. Our own soldiers are known to have died of this disease in the recent war; it was a malady recognized as serious in many of our hospitals. May it never cast its shadow upon your soul! But there are those, like one of Byron's heroes, who have houses and yet are homeless: —

> "He entered in his house; his home no more;
> For without hearts there is no home."

And there are many others who have but a hut, and yet find in it all the pleasures of home: —

> "We need no power or splendor,
> Wide halls or lordly dome:
> The good, the true, the tender, —
> These form the wealth of home."

May these hints prove a blessing to your households! When you die, may it be written upon your tomb, as it is upon one where sleeps the dust of a woman who passed away in a good old age, after sixty years of married life: "She always made home happy." When your body shall go to its "long home," may your spirit be "at home with the Lord," and with all who have followed Him on earth! There may you be so happy as to receive, one after another, the loved ones you have left behind, purified by the salutary influences of your earthly home, and made meet to abide with the Master forever!

DUTY.

"And now I beseech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which we had from the beginning, that we love one another. And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that as ye have heard from the beginning, ye should walk in it." — 2 JOHN 5, 6.

LET us look at a single statement of the text, on which all the rest hinges: "This is love, that we walk after His commandments." The meaning seems to be, that there is no necessary conflict between the divine law and our affections and sentiments: obedience to God is consistent with the indulgence of love, whether it be directed towards Him, or towards mankind, or towards the pursuits of life. But, as our race is constituted, we behold in every bosom a warfare between inclination and duty: in frequent instances we love those objects and those courses that we ought to hate, and we hate those we ought to love; and we oppose our preferences to the rules of righteousness established in the sacred Word and in our consciences. One great purpose of Christianity is to compose this difference, to create in our hearts a fondness for that which we know to be right,

however disagreeable it may have been, and to assist us in trampling under foot all desires repugnant to the will of Him whose prerogative it is to reign over us.

In many, the struggle between inclination and duty is but faint, because inclination is paramount, and the conscience speaks but in a whisper. In a school for young women the teacher once wrote to each student: "What is your aim in life?" There were various responses; and one replied, in a spirit of thoughtless merriment: "To breathe." It was a jest; but do we not know persons who might say, in all seriousness, that they live merely for the gratification of the present mood or whim or desire, whether it be idle as the inspiration of the air, or momentous with disaster to themselves and others? They care not for the law of God, and they do not hear even the dictates of prudence: their conscience is seared, and the more remote consequences of their deeds are hidden easily, since their horizon does not extend beyond the passing hour, whose impulses are their sole guide.

But looking somewhat higher, at the great majority of men and women, we discover persons in whose hearts this moral conflict is evident. In many there is a drawn battle; neither inclination nor the sense of duty wins any permanent advantage: if one gains the ascendency for an hour, it is dashed down ere long, and the other becomes supreme for as brief a period; and the soul is like a day in March when the wind changes a hundred times, now roaring out of the frosty north, and now bearing to us the soft breath of the south. Indeed, so constant is this warfare, from infancy till death, that most of us grow

accustomed to it, and are scarcely aware of its extent, or of the awful issues involved; as those brought up near Niagara become conscious of the thunder but seldom, unless some one speaks of it.

This strife between inclination and duty rages even in the heart of the Christian. It was an Apostle who wrote: "I find, then, a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inner man: but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?" And again: "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would."

Though there are inclinations in the heart of the Christian which oppose his better nature, he may refuse to give them expression in his words and his deeds, and may put them in subjection, placing himself on the side of conscience. In Guido's painting of "Michael and the Dragon," which Hawthorne deemed almost worthy to take rank with the greatest works of art, the beautiful archangel stands upon the fallen foe, holding a drawn sword, victorious, supreme, with a slight expression of disdain in his face: but the monster beneath him lives; it cowers and writhes; it dare not lift its head, but it is not yet slain. And this is a symbol of the conquest we may gain over our evil propensities even before

they are destroyed: we may yield ourselves to the right; the angel may stand triumphant upon the fiend, so that, though sin is within us, we reign over it. Thus the Apostle to the Gentiles said: "It is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me." And again: "I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."

The Christian differs from others in that the sense of duty not only has the ascendency, but is gaining a victory which is destined to be complete. Indeed, in some instances, even here on earth, the conquest is almost effected, and inclination makes but a feeble resistance. Louis IX. of France, who has been pronounced a saint by the Pope of Rome, once called on Joinville, in company with some monks, in order to engage in religious conversation. The noble whom he thus instructed and honored has given us an account of the interview, a part of which I will read: "'Now I wish,' he continued, 'to know which you would prefer to be, a leper, or to have committed a mortal sin?' And I, who never told him a lie, I answered I would rather commit thirty mortal sins than be a leper. When the monks had gone, he called me to him alone, made me sit down at his feet, and said, 'How could you tell me what you did yesterday?' And I answered that I should say the same thing over again. Then he said, 'You spoke rashly and foolishly; for there is no leper so hideous as he who is in a state of mortal sin. When a man dies, he is set free from the leprosy of the body; but when a man dies who has committed a

mortal sin, he does not know, nor can he be quite sure, that his repentance has been such as to secure the forgiveness of God. And for this reason he ought to be greatly afraid lest this leprosy of sin should last as long as God is in heaven. Therefore I entreat you as urgently as I can, for the love of God and the love of me, to teach your heart to choose rather that any ill should happen to your body, by leprosy or any other disease, than that mortal sin should attack your soul.'" The spirit of this exhortation entered into the whole life of the monarch who uttered it; amid the temptations of an age celebrated for its social corruptions, as it was for the Crusades with which it sought to compound its iniquities, he stood unstained and unaccused. And have we not all known persons who seemed ripe for a better world, whose souls appeared to enjoy a truce with sin, disturbed a little by this lawless power, but calm with the consciousness of victory?

Having sketched thus the conflict between inclination and conscience in three classes of persons; first, in the hearts of those who permit inclination to reign supreme; second, in hearts where the battle is indecisive, and neither force gains a permanent advantage; and, third, in hearts where the sense of duty is triumphant; let me now persuade you, by a few brief arguments, to deny your inclinations in so far as they rebel against Heaven, and to place yourself on the side of God in His strife against the evil within you.

First. Many women dread a life of duty because they fear it will render them rigid, ungraceful, unlovely: it

is natural for us to desire the favor of others, and to dislike the reputation of singularity. Such persons suppose that the ideal woman is a blossom, bending before every zephyr, and empty of positive convictions, and waiting to be filled with these dews as they shall distil from the lips of the lover or the husband. But no man of discretion admires a character like this: his ideal of womanhood resembles, rather, the Corinthian column, symmetrical as a flower, and crowned with acanthus-leaves, but strong as the plainer Doric and Ionian. The woman he admires is pleasing, deferential, and disposed to accept his wishes as her law: but as he is to commit to her keeping his fortune, his honor, and his offspring, he expects her to possess a conscience as firm as his own; and should it even inspire her with scruples which he does not possess, he will respect her the more for the purity of heart which they reveal. The women who are worshipped with such adoration as it is lawful to pay a creature, whose very shadows are held sacred, like that of Florence Nightingale, which the wounded soldiers used to kiss as she passed, are those who have learned the secret of the text, the union of inclination and obedience, and who, in a spirit of kindness, hold themselves firmly above all that can soil in the least the whiteness of their souls.

Second. Those who sacrifice their conscience in order to gratify their inclinations and make themselves the more pleasing, not only lead useless lives, but often do irreparable injury to persons with whom they associate. They yield to the dictates of fashion, whatever they may be,

without a thought; and, indeed, this is a power which, when it is evil, only a regard for the Word of God can enable us to withstand. "We may read in Hume's History," writes Rev. William G. Eliot, D.D., "that for two centuries the whole priesthood of England expended their strength against certain insignificant fashions; but the historian says, that although they were able to excite the whole community to the wars of the Crusades, in which both blood and treasure were poured out like water, the pointed shoes, with chains appended to the knee, continued in spite of them." How many young women, yielding thoughtlessly to this tyrant, have tempted the young man to take his first taste of wine, or even of some stronger beverage; have smiled away his objections, and have helped to make him the brutal sot, the terror of wife and children, the disgrace of his name, that he afterwards became! "You may rely upon it," said a young man to his Pastor, "that if they mix the drink for us, we will not refuse to take it. If their lips first touch the glass, we are sure to drain it. If they evidently think us better company when our tongues are loosened by wine, and join in the laugh when we tell them of our follies, ministers may as well stop their preaching, unless they can go a step farther back, and begin at the right place." And what infinite disaster such a woman brings to her children! As they behold her obeying the impulse of the moment, whether it is right or wrong, they too serve their whims and moods; as she is not guided by a sense of duty, they are quick to learn the lesson, and grow careless even of the obligations they owe to her; as she

desires only to please, they become subtle, plausible, crafty, knowing nothing of true nobility: and thus in her sons and daughters she gives to the world multiplied images of herself, to worship its pelf, to cringe before its frowns, to conciliate its smiles, and to increase the sum of its sin and its misery.

Third. The idea of duty is unpleasant to some, because it is associated with gloom and unhappiness, while inclination spreads before them a meadow of green grass and gurgling brooks, where they may disport themselves without a care or a pang. Here is a double deception, first, concerning the path of duty, and, second, concerning the path of inclination. True, a life of inclination is pleasant at first; but whither does it lead? I have crossed the Colorado where it is a rivulet purling between banks gay with flowers; but if I had followed it in its downward course, I should have come to a wilderness, and should have seen it plunging over precipices and torn to foam in whirlpools and darkened with the shadows of gorges whose awful cliffs, towering to the sky, shut out the sun. Such is the history of those who make their pleasure their guide: they start in a mead of delights; they close their career in the gloom of despair. But the path of duty, beginning sometimes among rocks and thorns, is seen to mount into clearer light and penetrate fairer regions, until even here on earth heaven seems to open about it with glory and felicity unknown to those who walk in their own way and think their own thoughts and do such deeds as are most agreeable to the carnal nature. Madame de Chan-

tal forsook a cheerful home in order to nurse the sick; and though the task was hard for a time, she became at length so absorbed in its performance, that when she desired to do penance in the most rigorous manner she abstained a few days from the work that had grown more inviting than the food she ate.

If you continue the warfare, invoking divine aid, you will find that after a time most of your inclinations will come over to the side of duty and assist you, so that the right will grow delightful, and all wrong desires will grow feeble. There is a fine instance of this in the life of Eleanor, Empress of Austria. By nature she had many obstacles within herself. She had a passionate temper and an iron will; and she was strong in body as in mind, being able to carry burdens from which men shrank. She was brave, also, and knew nothing of feminine timidity: a thunderbolt once fell on the table where she sat, and she remained undisturbed. The only amusement she enjoyed was the chase, in which she was equally daring and successful. Altogether, she promised to be a masculine and ruling spirit in the household. Leopold, the Emperor, was a pious but timid little man, such as a high spirit like hers could scarcely endure; and when she was informed that he had selected her to be his Queen, she rebelled. She was not beautiful; and in order to repel him she went with bare head in the noonday sun, that she might acquire even a worse complexion than she already had: but the result was the reverse of her desires, and her face became more blooming than before. Finding no way to decline the honor her monarch proffered

her, she yielded, and became his wife. She determined to do her whole duty to her husband: she obeyed one she did not love; and even in matters most repugnant to her she conformed to his preferences at once with cheerfulness. He became fondly attached to her, and often said: "God gave me this holy wife to console me through the unhappy years of my reign." She in turn learned to love him with all her soul; inclination and conscience were reconciled. Her biographer writes: "The love of Eleanor for her husband originally sprang from duty, but time gave it the depth and tenderness of heartfelt passion. Its force was well proved during the tedious illness which closed the life of Leopold in 1705. She remained in his room to the last, a devoted and unwearied nurse; jealous in her affection, she would let no hand save her own touch or serve him. Fatigue brought on erysipelas and sciatica, but she would never once undress in order to take a more refreshing rest than the two hours' slumber she allowed herself at night. She knew her sorrow to be useless to him whom she loved, and she stoically suppressed every sign of grief. When his last agony began, she upheld his dying head. He expired on the kind heart where, in trouble and disease, he had ever found consolation and repose. When all was over, Eleanor rose, kissed the cold hands of her husband, retired to the next room, and, for the first time in her life, gave way to a passionate sorrow that would not be controlled." So ever when we determine heroically to pursue the path of duty, though it be rugged at first, it becomes fragrant with flowers; and our inclinations, re-

bellious in the beginning, are reconciled, for the most part, and turn to be our allies. "This is love, that we walk after his commandments."

If now you have resolved to lead the noble life to which I invite you, it is time for me to say that the sense of duty may be abused, and to point out some sources of error in regard to it, that you may be on your guard against them.

First. Your conscience is not infallible, and may lead you into transgression: if you err in judgment, it will sanction the mistake, and command you to do that which is wrong. When Madame de Chantal determined to take the veil, there is no doubt that she acted from the highest motives. But did she not sin? She had an aged father and a young son who demanded her care; yet she forced herself from them. The passage of her biography that records her struggle is very pathetic: "She knelt at the feet of her father, and, not without tears, besought him to bless her, and take care of her son: at length he said: 'O my God! it belongs not to me to oppose Thy designs. It will cost me my life. To Thee, O Lord, I offer this dear child; receive her, and be Thou my comfort.' He raised and blessed her as he spoke. She was a kind mother, full of tenderness; her children loved her passionately, and none loved her better than the young son she was going to leave in order to become the help and comforter of strangers. He cast himself at her feet; he twined his arms around her neck, and entreated her not to go: seeing, at length, that his prayers would not avail, he laid himself down on the threshold of the door,

and said: 'I cannot detain you; but if you must go, pass, then, over the body of your child.' She stepped over him, then returned weeping. A clergyman, tutor to her son, thought he saw her constancy waver, and reproved her. Her answer, 'I am a mother,' might have softened a harder heart." What was the result of her strange decision? "A year after, a great affliction befell Madame de Chantal: her father died at Dijon. Her soul was torn with remorse. She had forsaken him in his old age, when the sacrifice of a year would have made him happy, and would surely not have been accounted as a sin by the merciful God, who commanded filial love and reverence." You should be sure that your inclinations are evil, and your conviction of duty founded in Scripture and reason, before you create a warfare between the two, and trample down, it may be, the holiest instincts of your nature. Take the Bible as the lamp of your conscience, and you will not be misguided.

Second. You may make a mistake of the opposite kind, and assume that your inclination is holy, when in fact it is worthless; you may surrender yourself to mere feeling, supposing that it is the gift of Heaven, and neglect the duties you owe, under the plea of duty itself. A lady once penned to Madame de Chantal a long account of the sentiments and ecstasies with which God had favored her. Madame de Chantal wrote in reply: "You have sent me the leaves of the tree; send me likewise some of its fruit, that I may judge of it." If our religious emotions cause us to neglect the ordinary tasks of life, and create in us a dreamy, unpractical, and sentimental

disposition, we may be assured that they come not from above.

Third. Another difficulty is, that, with the best desire to crucify our inclinations and perform our duties, we may look too high for a field of labor, and neglect the lowly opportunities immediately about us. A Greek philosopher, gazing at the sky while he walked forth at night, stumbled and fell. His friend said: "One should not have his head in the stars while his feet are on the earth." But do we not often see women deceived in this manner? They picture themselves as heroines; they long for some call to perform great actions and make vast sacrifices; while, with their eyes thus directed to visionary and romantic spheres, they overlook the little neglected tasks which, if performed, would make all things brighter about them. John Newton says: "I see in this world two heaps, the one of human happiness, the other of misery. Now, if I can take but the smallest bit from one and add to the other, I carry a point. If as I go home a child dropped a halfpenny, and if by giving it another I can wipe away its tears, I feel that I have done something: and I should be glad, indeed, to do greater things; but I will not neglect this." Quaint George Herbert sings, —

"Teach me, my God and King,
In all things Thee to see;
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for Thee.

All may of Thee partake;
Nothing can be so mean

Which, with this tincture, FOR THY SAKE,
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant, with this clause,
Makes drudgery divine;
Who sweeps a room as for Thy laws,
Makes that, and the action, fine."

It will be a consolation in the hour of death, if you can look back with the humble persuasion that you have sought to do your duty towards God and man: in that extremity the earth fades and eternity looms large from the mist which gathers upon the eyes; your heart calls out for preparation and support; and the conviction that you have endeavored, through the grace of Christ, to obey His will, while it cannot puff up with exultation and pride, may keep you from falling into despair, since it is a comfortable evidence of a regenerate heart. Nelson received his mortal wound while standing on the deck of his vessel in the thick of a terrible combat. Some time afterwards, as he was sinking, he was told that the victory was won. "Thank God!" he said, "I have done my duty." With these words his spirit passed away. As you shall draw to the close of life's battle, how happy will it be if you can repeat them! Not in vainglory or self-righteousness will you desire to utter such a sentiment, nor with the foolish thought that you have been faultless; but with the sincere consciousness that they express the struggle and the aim of your career, and with fervent trust in the mercy of Heaven through Jesus your Atonement, you may go to your account with an assurance denied to all who recall only days misspent, opportunities lost, and carnal inclinations gratified.

THE GOVERNMENT OF THE AFFECTIONS.

"Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life."—PROV. iv. 23.

WHEN Sir Walter Raleigh was brought forth to the block, the executioner asked him which way he would lay his head. He answered: "So the heart be right, it is no matter which way the head lies." These are noble words; but we may ask, without impeaching their worth, How shall the heart be kept right except by the vigilance of the head? This is the thought of the text: you must guard your affections with your utmost care, or they will lead you into wrong courses, whose end is misery.

Out of the heart are the issues of life. This is illustrated well by Spurgeon: "You have seen the great reservoirs provided by our water companies, in which the water which is to supply hundreds of streets and thousands of houses is kept. Now, the heart is just the reservoir of man; and our life is allowed to flow in its proper season. That life may flow through different pipes, the mouth, the hand, the eye; but still all the issues of hand, of

eye, of lip, derive their source from the great fountain and central reservoir, the heart. And hence there is no difficulty in showing the great necessity that exists for keeping this reservoir, the heart, in a proper state and condition; since otherwise that which flows through the pipes must be tainted and corrupt."

Speaking comprehensively, I may say that what you love you are. If you admire excellence in others, it is because you have it in yourself. If you prefer to mingle with those who are zealous Christians, it is an evidence that you are one of them: "We know," says the Apostle John, "that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." On the other hand, if you are fond of vain associations, it is because your heart is vain, though you may display a fair exterior. "Pythagoras," says Dean Bolton, "before admitting any one into his school, inquired who were his intimates." The philosopher wisely interpreted the character of the applicant by the company he sought; and there is no better way in which to judge.

In general, your affections constitute your will, and determine your course of conduct. There are heroic persons who act from a sense of duty, and mortify their desires; but usually mankind do as they like, their preference controlling them absolutely. "The wicked," according to Solomon, "will do wickedly;" and Christ says: "If a man love me, he will keep my commandments;" and an Apostle declares that "love is the fulfilling of the law." The whole tenor of Scripture is a requirement that we secure a change of heart in order

to secure a change of life, and a proffer of the divine assistance necessary to transform our affections, so that they shall hate the unbelief and impenitence that by nature they love, and love the holy God, the holy Church, and the holy employments from which they are alienated. And surely those forces of your being which are supreme in the determination of its character and its destinies deserve your most careful attention.

But my subject is specially important for woman, whose affections constitute the greatest force of her nature. Through these she receives her chief joys and her chief sorrows; nay, even her excellences and her defects, her virtues and her follies, proceed from her heart, and are colored by her love or her hatred. If she is fortunate in her affections, adversity has little power to sting her; if unfortunate, the mischief is beyond remedy. If they are happy, they shine like the unclouded sun, which fills the lowliest valleys with splendor; if they are abused, they are like the sun in the prophetic vision, clothed in sackcloth, and shedding shadows more baleful and ghastly than those of midnight. Let her learn in the morning of her life to preserve them from degradation, that they may bless her all her days with purity and peace. May the following brief hints, by the grace of God, assist her in the task.

First. It is worth while to consider the proper economy of the affections, for there is much love wasted on insignificant objects. The vine, formed to wrap itself about the tree, to conceal the decay of its lord, and to bind up the branches shattered in the tempest, is some-

times found prone upon the earth, gathering the weeds, nay, the very dust, in its tendrils. It causes us a sensation of pity when we behold affections, designed to bless the unhappy and capable of rescuing the children of want, exhausted on a plant or a poodle, knowing no higher object of devotion. I would have you fond of pets; but do not make them objects of idolatry, nor concentrate upon the narrow space of a flower-stand or a bird-cage a wealth which might better be bestowed in works of charity and mercy.

Second. The statement of my subject, the government of the affections, implies that you may exercise a certain command over your heart, guiding it by your judgment to suitable objects of interest, and withholding it from those which are doubtful or improper. But how usual it is for the young to leave their affections unwatched, to be controlled by them rather than to subject them to the sway of reason and conscience! Their exercise is such a satisfaction that the objects on which they fasten themselves are deified at once without critical inspection, and attachments are formed at which the prudent and the wise are pained; so that it may be said in the language of Lalla Rookh, —

> "She loves; but knows not whom she loves,
> Nor what his race, nor whence he came, —
> Like one who meets in Indian groves
> Some beauteous bird without a name,
> Brought by the last ambrosial breeze
> From isles in undiscovered seas,
> To show his plumage for a day
> To wondering eyes, and wing away!"

Suffer your love to wander without the direction of your reason, and it is probable that it will fix upon some one of whom you have learned little; and if, on riper acquaintance, his greatest excellence should prove to be a vesture as faultless or a voice as pleasing as that of the bird, you need not be surprised; and if his gravest defect should be a head as witless or a disposition as fickle as that of the bird, you will have occasion to congratulate yourself on a happy escape from the usual consequences of such folly.

You should beware of giving your affections to one whose habits are not the best. In many a field of Upper Italy you may see a woman yoked with an ox, drawing the plough. Your blood boils with anger at this degradation of your sex; but there is a more pitiable sight where tenderness is wedded to brutality, where innocence is joined to vice. With our utmost caution such instances will occur at times; and then it is for the wife to make the best of her hard lot, calling up all her patience and her faith, putting her hope in God, and keeping vigilant watch over herself that she may not let slip any opportunity to redeem the partner of her life, and that she may not learn to seek a blunted conscience, and to sympathize with the evil which touches her, as an alleviation of her pain. But it is worse than folly to enter carelessly, or as some do deliberately, upon such a career of woe. Do not be cheated by promises of reformation, nor dream that you may win another to virtue by risking your happiness. Remember that any mistake of this kind is remediless: you may hide disappointment from the world,

as the stricken bird covers its wound with its wings, but the anguish will not be soothed; and should you even brave the observation of others, and publish your wrongs, and tear yourself away from their author, you would carry a bruised and bleeding heart to the last. The only assurance of a fortunate love is the morality of him on whom you bestow it.

Third. Many make the great mistake of sacrificing their affections for a home, for social station, for riches. Now, you need not indulge such romantic fancies as would lead you to commit yourself to one who has no prospect, either in the promise of his business or in the probity, capacity, and energy of his character, of providing for your necessities; but you will be guilty of supreme sacrilege if you give your hand where you cannot give your heart, and vow before God to love one for whom your warmest sentiment is that of mere endurance. Your present associations, perhaps, are not congenial; and sometimes you are ready to fly from the misery at any risk, like the fledgling that finds its nest too narrow, and flings itself out upon the earth to be devoured. Or the hope of wealth may tempt you, and you are ready to destroy the happiness of life in order to possess its gilding. It is said that when the ill-fated steamer "Central America" caught fire, the passengers, most of whom had with them the treasure they had found in the mines of California, forsook this in order that they might be able to swim, should the necessity for doing so arise. But the stewardess rushed into the abandoned state-rooms, collected all she could find, and tied her apron, filled with the glit-

tering grains, around her waist. Then she hastened forth: she was almost too late, for a boat was ready to start; and in her eagerness to escape she sprang from the deck, missed her aim, and shot into the water like a stone, the weight of her booty sinking her at once. Are there not many like her, who for gold leap into troubled oceans from which they can never be rescued? Alas for the young, the innocent, the unsuspecting, who plunge into shining misery, into the crime of promises they will not keep, into the bonds of a wedlock that is but a mockery, into domestic estrangement, into endless remorse, where the heart is choked and the soul becomes the cold abode of greed and ambition that shut out all tender sympathy and kindness! Alas, that parents will sometimes rejoice in the bargain which consigns their child to such a fate! The Earl of Rochester was not too severe when he said: "Mothers who force their daughters into interested marriage are worse than the Ammonites, who sacrificed their children to Moloch; the latter undergoing a speedy death, the former suffering years of torture, but too frequently leading to the same result."

Fourth. Nature is full of mimicry; and you may be deceived by emotions of a pleasing character, supposing them to be phases of your affections, while, in fact, they are but simulations and deceits. "The avowal of preference by one of the other sex," says Mrs. Sandford, "or even the less explicit indication of it, may excite in a woman feelings which approximate to affection, but which are not the genuine feeling, and will not stand the test of time. There is something amiable, indeed, in the senti-

ment thus engendered. It proceeds from a delicate and grateful mind, which feels that affection is a choice and rare tribute, and that, when freely given, it ought at least to receive some return." There is also a fondness for homage, which has its source in vanity, and which is mistaken for affection: the coquette may suppose that she is interested in the flatterer, while in fact she cares only for his flatteries, and would feel the same responsive glow did they proceed from any other person. It is possible, once more, that the fancy may be touched while the heart remains unaffected, and that you may mistake the cold light of the one for the fervor of the other. You may be deceived, again, by your admiration of attractive features or manners, a sentiment quite different from love, and indeed quite consistent with indifference or even aversion. Against all these counterfeits of affection you should guard yourself. It is said that some travellers in the tropics, resting under the boughs of a tree, heard the wind spring up, and saw the branches swaying over their heads; when suddenly the air was filled with green leaves fluttering to the ground. If they were surprised by this shower of foliage, so easily torn off, what was their astonishment to behold each leaf begin to move over the earth! Examining the wonder more closely, they found that the leaves were insects whose wings were shaped and tinted to resemble the foliage where they had their abode, and thus to protect them from their natural foes. Thus, sentiments which you deem most profound affections, and regard as eternal, may prove but imitations, so loosely attached to your being that the

lightest breezes of adversity or the transient flaws of temper will cause them to disappear. If you misinterpret these, the error may be disastrous, as you may be led to make vows which you cannot revoke, though you repent them in dust and ashes.

Fifth. As there are sentiments that simulate genuine affection and deceive the unwary, so, on the other hand, your heart may be enlisted while you suppose that it is cold and unappreciative, and refuse to follow its dictates. Not infrequently persons say: "I respect, I esteem, I admire, but I doubt that I love: my estimate is one of the judgment, to which my heart makes little response." Now, it is quite possible to be in such a state. But it is possible, also, to mistake ardent and profound affection for the mere esteem of the judgment. There is a foolish love which has little to do with the reason, nay, which casts aside the dictates of reason as impertinent, and which rushes blindly upon destruction. There is also a true love which, if it does not spring from the reason, is accordant with it; and this kind of affection, based on esteem, as it is assured that its object is worthy, grows stronger with the lapse of time, and proves a perennial fountain of satisfaction and happiness. But many young persons long for the first, and despise the second; they must have their romance; and they regard it as a sufficient ground to suspect an attachment that it leads to no risk and involves no adventure. Its quietude, its confidence, its accordance with the mature verdict of the mind, render it distasteful; it does not fulfil the ardent dreams of years; it has no tumult; it lacks the blissful

pain of which the poet in every age has sung. The Greeks taught that Eros, the god of love, was the offspring of the west wind and the rainbow, and remained forever a child. Did they mean by this that love is a matter of mere ethereal emotion, of the heated fancy, disdaining all dictates of earthly prudence, and destitute of intelligence? Such is the picture too often painted by youth: would that it were otherwise! It is said also that love is blind. No. The truest affection is thoughtful as it is deep, and discreet as it is fervent, and far-seeing as it is unselfish: it may hide the imperfections of its object from others, but not from itself; it makes one wise as with a special gift of inspiration. If it should come to you in this character, reject it not because it is unlike the gorgeous pre-conceptions of your imagination, but receive it as a welcome guest; if it should approach as the wayward and fascinating boy, fitful as the west wind, though radiant as the rainbow, consent not to its pleading too quickly: consider long; or, if you are conscious that your judgment is unfitted for its work by the prejudice of your heart, carry the question to your family, and take counsel of those whose office and whose pleasure it is to care for your welfare.

Sixth. There is a great distinction between true affection and that mere fondness which can see no frailty and no wrong in its object, and which expends itself in tender words. These should be spoken daily; but the highest office of love is such faithfulness as perceives mistake and defect, and seeks with discretion and a godly conscience to cover them from the world, and to remove

them even at the risk of being misinterpreted and rebuked. The duty is never to be performed sharply, sternly, hastily, or in agitation; nor should you address yourself to it except at the most favorable times, when there is the best prospect of patient consideration on the part of the one you would benefit. Happy the husband whose wife, understanding his weakness as well as his strength, his failings as well as his excellences, adds to her knowledge the loyalty and the tact necessary to the removal of his faults without wounding his manly pride and destroying his self-respect!

Seventh. Restrain your affections so that they shall not degenerate into unfounded jealousy. I do not rebuke the jealousy which issues from wounded love, but that alone which springs up without cause. Love has always a hint of possible jealousy, as there are shadows wherever the sun shines: but there are shadows so broad and so dense that they vail the sun and bring upon us the darkness of midnight; and there is a jealousy so baseless and so absorbing that it turns all the light of love into blackness and all the peace of the household into discord: it springs not from your provocations, but from your temperament unwatched and unrestrained. Augustine was right when he declared: "He that is not jealous is not in love;" but the Queen of Navarre uttered a truth of equal importance: "It is said that jealousy is love: but I deny it; for, though jealousy be produced by love, as ashes are by fire, yet jealousy extinguishes love, as ashes extinguish the flame."

Eighth. The sweetest and deepest domestic love is

associated with love for God, from which it derives purity, faithfulness, strength, endurance. This truth is opposed to two errors. First, some persons are jealous of Christ: when the wife would become His disciple, the husband may hinder her, fearing that her fondness will grow weaker; or, if the husband yields to the invitations of the Gospel, the wife may resent with bitter tears this supposed desertion. Consider the awful guilt of making yourself God's rival, of exacting the honor which is His due, and of dragging a soul most dear to you from the very gates of Heaven into the darkness of eternal despair. But such a course is foolish as it is wicked; for the love of God renders doubly intense that of the husband or wife into whose heart it enters; and those who would have the family a circle of heavenly joy and serenity should welcome God to it; for God is love. The second error is as unnatural as the first: it represents God as jealous of the love which we pay to one another, and as smiting with disease or as removing from the world the objects of our attachment, because He regards them as idols. Now, it is true that He may seek to discipline us through their sickness or their death; but if so, it is in love for them and for us, not in impatience and rage. Or He may perceive that we love them unwisely, though not too fervently, and may desire to correct the mistakes of our affection. In His Word he reproves us for loving them too little, and gives us no hint that it is possible to love them too much. Nevertheless, is there not a partial truth in this popular superstition? Yes; it is this: without loving our dear ones too well, indeed, without

feeling that unselfish devotion which we are commanded to cherish, we may accord them the chief position in our thought, and know no higher objects of worship; and the sin will consist, not in loving them too much, for that is impossible, but in loving God too little, or not at all. The same Being who says, "Honor thy father and thy mother," also declares: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me." If you give to the creature the position which belongs to the Creator, He is not incensed with the object of your supreme affection, as if that were the guilty one, but with you, from whom the sin and folly proceed. These considerations, therefore, commend the love of God: it kindles and sustains all human love, and it blesses your fondest affection, commanding you to increase rather than to diminish it; while at the same time you pay your highest adoration and yield your strongest affection to Him who is the fountain whence all love proceeds, whether it be directed towards Heaven, or towards those on earth with whom His providence has cast your lot.

PURPOSE.

"When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her."— RUTH i. 18.

WHEN Naomi returned to her native country from the land of Moab, where she had lived for many years, she was accompanied for a time by her two daughters-in-law, now widowed like herself. "And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me?" She reasoned with them long, urging them to leave her and seek their kindred. "And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her. And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law. But Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God; where thou diest will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me." The fixed purpose of Ruth tri-

umphed: "When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, she left speaking unto her." You know the sequel: the two women came in penury to Bethlehem; Ruth engaged in the most humble employment for their support; her faithfulness in love and duty, her steadfastness, under extreme temptation to forsake the better way, commended her to a great man, to whom she was afterwards married: the wants of the mother and daughter were satisfied; and she became the ancestress of David the king, in whose character we may trace not only her affection, but also her firmness in the pursuit of the course which her judgment and her heart pointed out. I do not know a finer example of constancy and of its reward.

It is the testimony of all experience, that no great success can be achieved, and no great good accomplished, by those who have not definite plans and fixed purposes. No woman can become a heroine by accident or by the force of circumstances alone. There are too many persons who regard life as an expanse on which we lie, or over which we drift as the winds and tides may carry us, now rocked in calms, and now driven before storms, with as little ability to escape from the one as from the other; while those who are more wise determine whither they would go, and mark the way by the compass or the stars, and so spread the sail or ply the oars that neither adverse gales nor currents setting against their course can impede them. And in the formation of character it is specially important to have firm resolutions, not only because they enable you to make progress each day towards a better

womanhood, but because decision and steadfastness are themselves among the most admirable traits you can possess. They become pernicious only when they take the form of obstinacy, and prevent you from deferring to those whose authority is paramount to yours, or permit you to yield only after much argument and protest, ungraciously and ungracefully: within these limits they cannot but ennoble the soul.

A special Providence seems to open the gates of success before those who are determined in their purposes, so that when we read of their career, it seems almost as if God wrought miracles for their assistance. It is said, I know not with what degree of truth, that Gilbert Becket, the father of Thomas à Becket, had an adventure as romantic as any other related in history. He joined one of the crusading armies which went from England to the East, and, while visiting a holy place, was taken captive by an Emir of the Saracens. During his bondage his docility and intelligence gained him the esteem of his master; he became a favorite, and was permitted to converse with the members of the household. Eager to serve Christ, he instructed the daughter of his captor in the doctrines of the Romish religion: she heard him often in private, and gradually formed for him a strong attachment. By her aid he escaped, and returned to his home in London, where he was lost in the mass of the citizens, among whom he had no special distinction. After a time he heard the rumor that a strange young woman had been found in the streets uttering his name. She could speak but two English words, "Gilbert" and "London;" and

her singular demeanor had attracted a rabble, who followed her with laughter. Being brought into his presence, she was overjoyed at the recognition: she had forsaken her father's house, determined to find the foreigner she loved; and in a time of great peril, when there were few facilities of travel, and knowing little of any language save her own, she had traced her way, a thousand happy circumstances assisting her journey. The Briton did not abuse her childlike confidence; but, touched with her devotion, had her baptized, and made her his wife. No such career of peril may be before you: yet in the path of every one there are frightful difficulties; and if you move upon them boldly, you shall find that mysterious agencies have removed them from your sight, as the angels rolled away the stone from the Sepulchre which the women of the Resurrection desired to visit. Opportunity waits upon resolution.

A fixed purpose leads to the development of ingenuity; and persons of the most timid disposition, under the stimulus of a determined mind, may surprise themselves and those who observe them by the brilliancy of their invention and the prosperity of their plans. This is the meaning of the adage, "Where there is a will there is a way:" the will, firmly set upon its course, spurs the intellect to unusual activity, so that it discovers many paths before concealed, and forms many devices which in its more sluggish condition were quite beyond its capacity. A good instance of this is found in the Life of Hannah More, who, with her sister Martha, resolved to carry the light of Christian truth into the village of Cheddar, where

the people lived in a state of barbarous ignorance and vice, without education, and destitute of religion. True, the inhabitants were under the care of two clergymen: but the vicar lived at Oxford, "and received fifty pounds a year for duties which he never fulfilled;" and the rector "was intoxicated about six times a week, and very frequently prevented from preaching by two black eyes, honestly acquired by fighting." A minister of a better stamp "rode over from Wells once every Sunday to preach to a congregation of eight persons; and in the whole place there was but one Bible, and that was used to prop a flower-pot." How could two unaided women regenerate this demon-land? They took a room at the public house, and passed a few days in the quiet study of its condition; and after a time decided to open a school. "I was told," Miss More says, "that we should meet great opposition if I did not try to propitiate the chief despot of the village, who is very rich and very brutal: so I ventured to the den of this monster, in a country as savage as himself. He begged I would not think of bringing any religion into the country; it made the poor lazy and useless. In vain I represented to him that they would be more industrious, as they were better principled, and that I had no selfish views in what I was doing. He gave me to understand that he knew the world too well to believe either the one or the other. I was almost discouraged from more visits, but I found that friends must be secured at all events; for if these rich savages set their faces against us, I saw that nothing but hostilities would ensue: so I made eleven more of these

agreeable visits, and, as I improved in the art of canvassing, had better success. Miss W. would have been shocked, had she seen the petty tyrants whose insolence I stroked and tamed, the ugly children I praised, the pointers and spaniels I caressed, the cider I commended, and the wine I swallowed. After these irresistible flatteries, I inquired of each if he could recommend me a house; and said that I had a little plan which I hoped would secure their orchards from being robbed, their rabbits from being shot, their game from being stolen, and which might lower the poor-rates. If effect be the best proof of eloquence, then mine was a good speech; for I gained in time the hearty concurrence of the whole people, and their promise to discourage or favor the poor as they were attentive or negligent in sending their children." The work begun here extended to other parishes equally degraded; and, in regions so wild that no constable dared execute his office among the cottagers, the gentle heralds of the Cross triumphed over all impediments, until twelve hundred pupils were gathered. The wit and sagacity they displayed in the prosecution of their task were such as their friends little supposed them to possess, and such as appears only where persons have formed deep resolutions that bring into play every faculty of the soul.

Those whose purposes are firm enjoy an immunity from solicitation unknown to persons who pause and vacillate, unable to fix their minds. So in the text, when Naomi perceived that Ruth was steadfastly minded to go forward, she left speaking to her. All of you have

learned by experience that during your moments of doubt and debate many conflicting appeals come to you, both from within and from without: it is as if God and Satan, Heaven and Hell, laid siege to the soul; and when at last you resolve to end the strife by pursuing firmly your course, all opposition is quelled in a moment. Here is a deep spiritual truth: when you set yourself to be a Christian, Satan respects your determination, and shakes you, if at all, less frequently and with a feebler arm, not caring to expend his strength in an effort whose vanity he suspects; and, on the other hand, when you decide to turn from your Redeemer, the Holy Spirit is grieved, and ceases to plead with a heart which He finds fully fixed in evil. Men and women about you also act in the same manner: if you waver between two courses, many advocates of each will present themselves to torment you; but if you announce an unalterable decision, those opposed to it will step aside, convinced that their efforts are useless, and will leave you in peace. The biographer of Mary Lyon says: "She made the impression on every one with whom she had any thing to do, from the common day-laborer to the President of a college, that if she had set herself to accomplish any thing, it was of no use to oppose her." In fact, considering the vast labor she performed, she met but little resistance. You are sometimes afraid to decide firmly in favor of your duty, lest you should provoke remonstrance. Remember, therefore, that you bring upon yourself the very thing you dread, the pain of conflicting counsels and emotions, by your indecision; while that which you avoid lest it arouse antagonism, tends to allay it.

Every young woman admires that kind of self-command which is not inconsistent with feminine modesty and grace. Not only is it required in the thousand emergencies of daily life, but it is the secret of that ease in society which contributes so much to our pleasure. This quality arises from a habit of quick and firm decision: those to whom it belongs have tutored themselves to determine at once the word they will use and the course they will pursue, and to adhere to their choice unless grave circumstances forbid. How ready they are to assist our perplexities and to resolve our doubts! How they charm us by the unassuming assurance of their manner and their speech! And if they mistake, how much we pardon, and with what difficulty we withhold ourselves from their misguidance! We prefer that the lady shall utter the wrong phrase, or strike the wrong note, and pass on oblivious, rather than that she shall pause to debate within herself, or go back to rectify and to publish her error. "I have seen manners," says Emerson, "that make a similar impression with personal beauty; that give the like exhilaration, and refine us like that; and in memorable experiences they are suddenly better than beauty, and make that superfluous and ugly. But they must be marked by fine perception, the acquaintance with real beauty. They must always show self-control: you shall not be facile, apologetic, or leaky, but king over your word; and every gesture and action shall indicate power at rest." Another writer has given us a vivid but less attractive picture: "Some girls appear to think that a kind of timidity and confusion of mind are alone lady-

like at times. Hence they never aim to rise above the fear of spiders and other animals which sometimes cross their path. The sight of one of these creatures extorts a shriek of surprise and fear from them, as if they were near the jaws of crocodiles."

Perhaps more souls are lost through indecision than through any other disposition of the mind. There are many, not greatly enamoured of impenitence, nor greatly opposed to the claims of God, who fail of salvation because they dream of some mighty energy from without which they expect to seize and constrain them, forgetting that "the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force," and that no prodigal ever made joy on high until he said with all his heart: "I will arise and go unto my father." Christianity demands that you be capable of strong purposes; it is not the weak and vacillating that receive its benefits. "Let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord; a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways." Our religion not only requires resolution, but it cultivates and strengthens the will, commanding it to hold fast unto the end, and supplying it with divine assistance to overcome all the solicitations of the tempter. Hence the churches, composed of persons thus gifted by nature and aided by grace, are the dominant influence in civilized society; they reign because they are the chief centres of energy in every good work, stimulating the endeavors even of those who are hostile to them, and

swaying every part of the community, as the brain moves the members of the body most distant from the head.

Having now commended decision of character, let me speak of some things which may prevent you from acquiring it.

Brilliant abilities often prove treacherous friends, leading the possessor to rely for success upon her store of native resources, rather than upon discipline and acquisition, and betraying her into indolence of mind and impotence of will, so that she cannot form or execute a purpose which costs energy and perseverance. I will not say that mediocrity is a blessing; but certainly the appearance of it has kept many young persons from presumptuous indolence. Or if one has genius, then poverty is its best teacher, spurring to exertion, and schooling the will to wrestle and to overcome. Mary Lyon had such an exceptional memory that she committed the Latin grammar in three days; and all her powers of mind and body were equally remarkable; and, but for the hardships of her early years, it is probable that she would have become a brilliant conversationist, a queen of society, to charm a small circle of admirers, and to die, leaving no strong impression of herself on the world. Dr. Hitchcock has said: "A sound mind in a sound body was her birthright. But He who breathed into her clay so much more vital fire than He commonly sees fit to bestow on an individual, next adapted her outward circumstance to its safe keeping. She was not born to ease and affluence. She was not cradled on down. She did not tread on soft carpets, loll on cushioned sofas, ride at

first in her basket-cradle and afterwards in a coach. So doing and faring, she might have become by middle age so enervated in body and mind as scarce to adventure to set the sole of her foot upon the ground for delicateness and tenderness."

Another danger arises from an habitual indulgence in revery. Woman is tempted more strongly than man to pursue disjointed trains of meditation; for her imagination is more vivid than his, and the seclusion and quietude of her life are favorable to its exercise: while the hard duties of his daily business dispel his illusions, clip the wings of his fancy, enchain him to the earth, and force him to consider the most difficult questions in the most practical way. Some seeds are clothed with down, on which they float through the air till the zephyr drops them, perchance upon a rock; and those visionary excursions of the soul in which dreamy natures delight often terminate in no useful result, and bring us back, at last, to the barren regions of unwelcome facts. Nor can we engage in them frequently without enfeebling the intellect, and rendering ourselves incapable of sustained study upon important subjects, and becoming the sport of the influences which surround us: for in these moments of ethereal pleasure we no longer control our thoughts or our emotions; we suffer the will to stand idle, while those powers over which it should reign rebel and run riot; and, tasting the sweets of indolence, we become indisposed to all earnest exertion. The will, once deposed, does not regain its ascendency with ease. You should remember the fate of Palinurus, the pilot of Æneas.

He yielded himself to the blandishments of Morpheus, and surrendered himself to dreams; and the treacherous deity drew him into the billows. In his fall he bore away the helm. He never returned to control the vessel, which, but for the aid of a friendly god, would have drifted to destruction. Let the will be firm and vigilant, lest the mind, having lost its guide, float, a useless thing, to perilous shores. No doubt it is natural that you take refuge, at times, from the stings of existence, in memories of happier days or in visions of that which might have been; but it is a dangerous resort, and it is better, even with such sensitive natures as yours, to bear the ills of the present, than to escape them by an expedient that unfits you for the toils of the future.

Again: By an abuse of the popular novel you may lose all earnestness and decision of character. I do not condemn the better class of novels: I condemn only their abuse. They are good for dessert, but not for constant food; you should take them up as a recreation, and render them more welcome by mental toil such as they themselves cannot call forth. Those who make them their chief sustenance lead a life of expectancy, rather than of purpose: they think not of achieving success by their energy, but of receiving it as a boon from the hand of fortune. It is easy to indulge the fancy that you are like the Sleeping Beauty in the enchanted castle, that your knight is on his way to break the spell which binds you, and that you need but wait for the sound of his bugle and the flash of his sword. But do not forget that she had drowsed a hundred years when the deliverer came. And

over you also, if you weave these fond fancies, shall a century roll before his appearance; and you shall slumber in the dust, from which no mortal voice can arouse you, long before the hoofs of his prancing steed shall be heard.

I know that the young man forms a purpose in life more easily than the young woman. There are many avenues open to him, and in the great majority of instances he must choose between them, and pursue the one he has selected, or he must live in poverty and die in shame. There are fewer occupations to which she can apply herself, and there is not such sharp necessity to drive her on in those toils which demand intense application and invigorate the will. A teacher of wide experience says that in their earlier years girls study as successfully as boys, but flag as they approach womanhood. He asked a young woman the reason of this, and she explained it thus: "The boys are going into college; they have all before them: but we have nothing more to do; we are going nowhere." Mr. Higginson comments upon her statement as follows: "I cannot deny the truth of this. I have too often been asked, almost with tears, by young and well-taught girls, to suggest to them something that should fill the demands of heart and intellect; something to absorb their time and thoughts. A pupil in the School of Design once told me that in her opinion the majority of the scholars sought the occupation, not as a means of support, nor to gratify an artistic taste, but solely for the sake of an interesting employment."

Permit me, therefore, in closing, to point out to you some lines of labor in which you may accustom yourself

to form far-reaching plans, and to execute them with vigor. Is there any thing in the domestic pursuits of your home that you do not understand? Then, in becoming mistress of it you may not only prepare yourself for future necessities, but discipline your mind and your will; for these avocations furnish room for the exercise of the greatest talent, if not of genius. If your lot shall be that of the vast majority, if you shall be called to preside over a house of your own, and to rule as a head of the family, are you prepared to discharge the tasks and to meet the emergencies of the lofty but difficult station? Its demands are such that you may find in their study an interesting and useful occupation that shall challenge your highest powers. Are there no poor and sick who appeal to your sympathy? We have had so little suffering from want in this country, that it has not become fashionable here, as it is in England, for every woman of leisure to seek out the needy and supply their necessities: we have the duty done through associations and missionaries supported by our money; and we withhold the gifts of our personal visitations, and miss the luxury and the profit they would bring us. But the miseries of American society are increasing so rapidly that we now require your tender hands to assuage them; and since this sphere of industry is unoccupied, there is scope in it for your most heroic resolutions. Are there no fine works of English literature with which you are unacquainted? Until you have explored these treasures, you cannot plead as an excuse for inertness and lassitude the difficulty of discovering an employment that shall tax your energies. Are

there no churches which ask the assistance of your tact, your accomplishments, your social influence? So long as they exist, they will afford you numerous opportunities of usefulness such as must evoke your patience, your endurance, your assiduity. Are there no foes within your soul that you should resist, no chains of habit to break, no faulty dispositions to correct? Your heart claims your toil and your perseverance. In short, while man is driven to activity, you are invited to it; and those of you who long for it need not seek far. The Master speaks to you as He spoke to His disciples of old: "Say not ye, There are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields, for they are white already to harvest."

THE MASCULINE WOMAN.

"A gracious woman retaineth honor: and strong men retain riches." — PROV. xi. 16.

NOYES translates the passage thus: "A graceful woman obtains honor, as strong men obtain riches." His comment is as follows: "Beauty and gracefulness are to woman what strength and valor are to men." The meaning, then, is, that woman finds her greatest influence and success through her finer qualities, while man finds his by the sterner attributes of the warrior. Bushnell has written a good commentary on this proverb, though without thought of doing so, and looking merely at the two sexes as they exist in nature: "The man is taller and more muscular, has a larger brain, and a longer stride in his walk. The woman is lighter and shorter, and moves more gracefully. In physical strength the man is greatly superior; and the bass in his voice, and the shag on his face, and the swing and sway of his shoulders, represent a personality in him that has some attributes of thunder. But there is no look of thunder in woman. Her skin is too finely woven, too wonderfully delicate, to be the rugged housing of thunder. Her soft,

upper octave voice, her small hands, her features played as in quality and not for quantity, her complexion played as if there were a principle of beauty living under it: there is abundance of expression here, as many great, proud souls of heroes have been finding in all ages, but it is unolympic as possible in kind." The lines in which Milton describes Adam and Eve also occur to me as an illustration: —

> "For contemplation he, and valor formed;
> For softness she, and sweet attractive grace."

There is a movement in this country and Great Britain whose object is to secure for woman the prerogatives hitherto deemed peculiar to man: manifestly, therefore, its tendency is to conceal the distinction between the two, and teach woman to cultivate the attributes of man, in order that she may assume his severer tasks. Most of its advocates sincerely disclaim the desire to ignore or to narrow the natural peculiarities which distinguish the sexes; but others avow it. The late Mrs. John Stuart Mill said in an article in "The Edinburgh Review:" "In the present close association between the sexes, men cannot retain manliness unless women acquire it." She saw, more clearly than many of those who accept her views, their real effect if applied to practical affairs; for if woman is to assume all the burdens of public and official life, she must dispense with those traits of character which would interfere with her new pursuits, and must gain those which at present render man more capable of engaging in them. If the demand made by the advo-

cates of this cause, many of whom are among the noblest of our race, were merely that more numerous avenues of employment suitable for woman be opened to her, that she be given every right of humanity before the law, or even that she be permitted to vote, I should not object; but when they propose to take her out of the sacred privacy of home, to place her before the crowd as the orator of the political canvass, to seat her in the chair of State, to plunge her into all the cares and distractions of extensive business, and thus to wear away her softness, her delicacy, her bloom, and to substitute for these the harsher traits of man, the pulpit would be recreant to its trust did it not enter its protest.

Let us understand distinctly the object of those who oppose this movement.

It is not to deprive woman of the highest culture of the intellect, or to teach her a contempt of learning: on the contrary, we admire her in proportion to the extent of her acquisitions, if she does not sacrifice those characteristics which are peculiar to her sex. The "Unitarian Monthly" has given us recently an example, in Mary Somerville, of lofty intellect and great scientific attainments combined with all that is most winning in the true woman: "She was as strong-minded as she was beautifully feminine. The eye so clear to follow the stars in their courses did not overlook the humblest flower. The mind that dictated this noble sentence: 'The perturbations of the solar system are only the oscillations of that immense pendulum of eternity which beats centuries as ours does seconds;' and this sentence: 'So that a very

small height above the surface of the earth the noise of the tempest ceases, and the thunder is heard no more in those boundless regions where the heavenly bodies accomplish their periods of eternal and sublime silence,' was open to the dumb appeal of the humblest animal; and she bore tenderly in her heart to her latest day the solitary pangs of the little bird starved in her absence."

We would not have women such triflers as "The Spectator" says they were in Addison's day: "Their amusements seem contrived for them rather as they are women than as they are reasonable creatures, and are more adapted to the sex than to the species. The toilet is their greatest scene of business, and the right adjusting of their hair the principal employment of their lives. The sorting of a suit of ribbons is reckoned a very good morning's work; and if they make an excursion to a mercer or a toy-shop, so great a fatigue makes them unfit for any thing else all the day long."

Nor would we have woman weak in will, an aimless toy, without convictions and purposes. We admire that Roman mother who, when her son was led forth to martyrdom, had the resolution to stand on the walls that she might see him pass, followed by the curious rabble; and who from her lofty position, at the risk of being arrested and put to death as a Christian, cried out to him: "My son, my son Symphorian, remember the living God, and be of good cheer. Raise thy heart to Heaven, and think of Him that reigneth there. Fear not death which leads to certain life." Does any woman suppose that strength of will may unfit her to pay that deference to the hus-

band which is his due? She should reflect that this deference is rendered only by those who have conquered themselves, who have learned self-control, and whose determinations are not lightly shaken. The habit of yielding always with ready cheerfulness to another requires the most sturdy resolution. Woman has by nature inclinations which point her to this as at once a duty and a pleasure; but, like other good impulses, these need to be schooled and invigorated so that their operation shall not be fickle and intermittent. All our faculties work unsteadily until they are disciplined by the will to constant activities; the loftiest intellect, for example, if destitute of training, will refuse to apply itself with that close attention necessary to the solution of the most difficult problems. It is not otherwise with the affectionate reverence of woman, which disposes her to accept the judgment of her husband as her law: it must be tutored in order that it may operate without weariness; and its education is the office of a will made imperious by discreet use, and accustomed to exercise absolute command over the soul. Happy he whose wife defers to his wishes, moved not alone by the fluctuating emotions of her heart, but by these confirmed by her conviction of duty and her habit of self-control; whose purposes are not accepted passively, but re-inforced and assisted by the ardor of an energetic disposition, loyal to them, not because of too great apathy to resist, but with all the enthusiasm of a noble nature.

What we desire is that woman shall remain woman, and shall avoid those pursuits and agitations which would

render her hard and coarse, which would wear away her modesty and her grace, and which would lead her to seek the accomplishment of her purposes by the rude armor of man rather than by the finer qualities with which her Maker has adorned her. Those who lack feminine tenderness and modesty have lost it by a long process of violence: they were not born thus destitute. It was fabled that Minerva sprang into existence clothed with the panoply of the soldier. Perhaps you have known earthly women whose brows seemed darkened as with the shadow of the helmet, whose hearts seemed covered with an impenetrable shield, whose nature was repellent as if they wore upon their bosom the Gorgon's head; and you have accused God of a cruel freak in their creation. But no. Usually they have attained this singular and unhappy state by an artificial process, a perversion of their being. And we protest against all influences which tend to produce a result so monstrous and so surprising.

There are various motives leading many women to sympathize with this movement without much consideration of its tendency.

One is a desire to taste the intoxication of public applause: the agitation gives rise to large assemblies, to debate, to discussions in the press, and promises, if successful, to lead woman to the bar, to the pulpit, into the arena of political strife, into office; and some are enamoured with the prospect. Ah! if they knew how unsatisfactory, how hollow, how bitter, their more famous sisters have found the encomiums of mankind; how the most celebrated have shrunk from the gaze of the multi

tude, even when it was directed to them in admiration, and have yearned for the delights of retirement and of home, they would crush from their hearts the ambition which is leading them astray. Mrs. Frances Anne Kemble has earned enduring fame on the stage: let us hear her words: "And so my life was determined, and I devoted myself to an avocation which I never liked or honored, and about the very nature of which I have never been able to come to any decided opinion. It is in vain that the undoubted specific gifts of great actors and actresses suggest that all gifts are given for rightful exercise, and not suppression; in vain that Shakspeare's plays urge their imperative claim to the most perfect illustration they can receive from histrionic interpretation: a business which is incessant excitement and factitious emotion seems to me unworthy of a man; a business which is public exhibition, unworthy of a woman." And Mrs. Browning, the greatest poet of her sex, confesses the inability of her heart to feed on the applause she won, and its yearning for domestic happiness: —

"Oh, my God, my God!
O supreme Artist, who as sole return
For all the cosmic wonder of Thy work
Demandest of us just a word, a name,
'My Father!' Thou hast knowledge, only Thou,
How dreary 'tis for women to sit still
On winter nights by solitary fires,
And hear the nations praising them far off,
Too far! ay, praising our quick sense of love,
Our very heart of passionate womanhood,
Which could not beat so in the verse without

Being present also in the unkissed lips,
And eyes undried because there 's none to ask
The reason they grew moist."

Others are nobly ambitious to discover a wider sphere of usefulness than their home, and they suppose that this movement offers them opportunities to benefit the race such as they cannot find in their own family circles. Rev. William G. Eliot, D.D., has answered this thought so well that I must quote from his sermons: "Why may not woman have the whole great sphere of the world to act in? Why should her influence be more limited than that of man? We answer that her own real influence is often stronger for being limited in its immediate action. The wider diffusion of our efforts lessens their strength, and sometimes prevents their efficacy. The greatest heat, for practical purposes, is produced by an instrument which concentrates the flame upon a single point. The hardest metals then cannot resist its power. But the same heat, diffused a very little, is of no avail. And so do we often see that the concentrated influence of affection is strong enough, in the sacred precincts of the family relation, to melt away the dross from the most stubborn heart, and to shape the heart itself after the heavenly pattern, when all influences out of doors, and all discipline of common life have had no effect."

The same eloquent preacher has another consideration equally applicable to the question before us: "It must be remembered that home influence extends beyond home. The best way to purify a stream is to cleanse its

fountains, and less effort will accomplish the work if begun there. The great current of society is created by those thousand little streams which are pure or impure according to the character of our homes. To purify them, or to keep them pure, is chiefly woman's work; and if truly done, the current would roll on, pure as the mountain-stream, to the eternal ocean. If it be not well done, all the Howards and Wilberforces can only succeed in filtering, here and there, a little of the corrupted water."

Some women are led to favor the movement now under discussion because they consider their present condition inferior to that of man, who is the head of the household. They resent with some scorn the language of the Apostle Peter: "Giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel." But, when rightly interpreted, these words are a most delicate compliment: they compare man to some strong and rude vessel adapted to the harder uses of life, and woman to a delicate vase, made of the choicest clay, beautiful in form, and covered with graceful tracery; it is admired not as a mere ornament, but also as that which makes the home more cheerful and attractive; it is too frail for the roughest usage, but of more value than many coarser things. That this is the meaning of the passage is evident, if we reflect that the weakness of which it speaks is such as we ought to honor, and not such as suggests inferiority: it is the fragility of that which is most refined and most winning.

Woman differs from man, but she is not inferior. If he is strong, she is beautiful; if he is daring, she wins

as much by her diffidence as he by his courage; if he is great in action, she is patient in suffering; if he convinces the mind, she persuades the heart; if he has knowledge, she has taste; if he excels in judgment, she is superior in sensibility; if he is a tribunal of justice, she is an angel of mercy. The Rev. Gordon Cathrod has well said: "The great charm of woman is that she is diverse from man, and not a man in the lower stage of development. The two together make a complete orb; apart they are only segments of the circle. Most unprofitable to me is the discussion about superiority. I would as soon think of contending with you which is the more beautiful flower, the rose or the lily; which is more essential to the life of the human frame, the brain or the heart; which is more valuable to the world, the glare of the day or the darkness of the night; which does more for the security of the planetary system, the centripetal or the centrifugal force. Both are necessary; each is admirable in its place; and the one was contrived for the express purpose of being an adjunct and auxiliary of the other."

We have found, now, that the chief arguments urged in favor of this movement militate against it. There are others equally cogent, a few of which I will consider in closing.

The attempt to blot out the distinction between the sexes is always a failure: the masculine woman has abjured those characteristics which are most admirable in her own sex, without acquiring those which are most admirable in the other; she is a very imperfect imita-

tion; and her nature, though usually repressed by an imperious will, breaks its fetters in emergencies, and asserts itself once more. The women of Rome were celebrated for their manly qualities, which they cultivated with assiduity; but, as an old author has said, "Though they boasted, while in security, of all the heroism of their husbands, they were in such a consternation when Hannibal approached the gates, that they were forbidden to appear in the streets, lest their cries should dispirit the soldiers and spread a general panic through the city." You may make woman coarse and hard, and may unfit her for the duties which God has assigned to her; but you cannot qualify her for those which belong to man; for war, for political strife, for the cares of office, for the intricate difficulties of jurisprudence, for the exactions of the pulpit; and if you cover her with the frosts of a virile habit, her heart, lacking the activities for which it was formed, will burst forth at times, like the fires of a volcano, over which the snows may repose in security for but a season, until the heat gathers force to rend the mountain and pour forth the molten flood which dissipates them in an hour.

The movement under consideration is dangerous to the peace of the home and to the very existence of the family as a sacred and permanent institution. It is dangerous to the peace of the household; for in every association there must be some authority from which there is no appeal: if there are two of equal importance, it is the verdict of all experience that usually there will be disagreement and conflict. As society is constituted at

present, the wife has more influence than the husband in deciding the destiny of the household; but in emergencies, and in moments of crisis, his voice is supreme and his will is imperious. Now, if you teach her to assert herself against his judgment at these periods so full of fate, you introduce civil strife into every family, and give to its younger members that greatest curse of childhood, an atmosphere destitute of love, and a memory of domestic bitterness. Most of those who have engaged in the agitation concerning which I speak do not thus interpret its tendency. But it is significant that all who hate the family, who teach that marriage should be a mere temporary arrangement, to terminate at the pleasure or the whim of either party, and that there should be no barriers to divorce, have given it their warm sympathy. They would not have rallied with unanimity to its assistance, did they not see in it a promise of such a revolution in social life as would bring them the greatest liberty to gratify their lawless desires. Good people may be deceived into the support of schemes which are pernicious; but the evil, as a mass, seldom rejoice in measures which foster virtue: they have a keen instinct to detect views favorable to license, and great enthusiasm in their advocacy: "Wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

The movement, in so far as it may lead woman to masculine self-assertion, will destroy her influence; for it is by her modesty, her gentleness, her charm, and not by force, that she affects the world. The Empress Livia gained such ascendancy over the mind of her husband

Augustus, that there were few things he could refuse her. This was remarked by many, and a lady once asked her how she had obtained her power. This is a part of her answer: "By being obedient to all his commands, and by not endeavoring to discover his secrets." Thus also by gentle means Clotilda won Clovis, her rude warrior, from heathenism to Christianity, and introduced a softer life among his people. It was he who exclaimed, when she told him how the Lord was crucified: "If I had been there with my Franks, I would have avenged Him!" Even when converted, he was a wild man still; but in his most savage mood he bowed to her with a reverence which none but the unselfish and affectionate could have won. Woman has never prevailed by strength or by vociferation: those influences which would render her more hard are her greatest foes: she reigns only when she is true to her own nature. The ermine of her royalty is innocence, which she must preserve untarnished; her diadem is piety towards God; her sceptre is kindness; her palace is the home in whose modest retirement she should delight; and her kingdom is the heart of her husband and her children, over which she bears a sway none the less potent that it is not attended by the frowns of authority.

I need not dwell long on my last thought, that a movement which would repress in woman the more excellent traits of her nature without giving her any other virtues as a compensation, which would mar the peace of the house hold and banish the family from society, and which would destroy her salutary influence over the world, would also

render her supremely unhappy. Picture her condition. With the conviction that she should have authority, that she is in bondage, that she is oppressed; with her mind arrayed not only against her circumstances, but against the impulses of reverence and deference within her own heart; her soul is the scene of warfare which you may be thankful to escape. The inmate of a house which she knows not how to rule by her sweetness and her love, where her will struggles for a supremacy it cannot win; repulsed, defeated, disappointed; who is so cruel as not to pity her lot? Formed to reign, but condemned to find herself destitute of empire; yearning for appreciation, but avoided as singular, eccentric, ungracious; keenly alive to praise and to blame; thirsting for accents of devotion which never bless her ears; ambitious of the power peculiar to man, but bitterly conscious that it is denied to her, and that in grasping for it she has lost the sceptre of her own sex; a queen who would be a king, and has become an exile; such is her fate. I do not say that the movement I have discussed has no element of justice which we should consider with favor; but since its full success would bring such despair to her in whose name it is advocated, it must be rejected until the good can be separated from the evil and presented for our approval apart from that which is so repugnant to our convictions and so full of peril to our hearts, our homes, our civilization, and our religion.

LITTLE FAULTS.

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines: for our vines have tender grapes." — SONG OF SOL. ii. 15.

THE verses most nearly associated with the text contain nothing but expressions of tender and confident love; but here is a note of discord. There were some intrusions of trouble in the garden where reigned such general delight. There were no great causes, to destroy affection at once; but there were small defects, which prevented perfect happiness: the bears were killed, but the little foxes remained to burrow under the wall, or to creep over it at night, and consume the bourgeoning fruit. This is the story of many a life: its promise is brilliant, its tender grapes hang large and abundant; no storm beats them down; the sun shines warm to fill them with generous juices: but they never reach maturity; minute faults, unwatched and unhindered, bite them off, so that we look for a large vintage in vain. There is sorrowful failure in place of the usefulness and the happiness we anticipated.

The sculptor's marble-cutter first smites from the figure which his imagination beholds in the block the larger

masses that encumber it; but as he proceeds with his task his blows are less free and his work is more careful: for perhaps but a single scale of the stone remains to be detached, and, while it must be removed at any cost of time and skill, the chisel must go no deeper. You should not be content to cast off from your character its larger sins; but you should remove, with equal determination, its minor imperfections, not satisfied while a single one remains. The Apostle Paul said he labored "that he might present every man perfect in Christ;" and your ambition for yourself should not be lower than was his for others.

But are the little foxes as destructive as the text represents? Do they destroy the vines? Do the more insignificant of our defects possess this malign power to spoil our usefulness and to mar our happiness? Let us examine some of them, and learn whether, indeed, it is so necessary to watch and resist their encroachments.

Let us take, first, a fiery temper. I do not refer to the steady and deep suspicion which some cherish as a part of their nature; nor to the cold hatred which woman, no less than man, may carry in the heart. Nor do I have in mind a contentious disposition like that of John Lilburne, of whom Cromwell said that if he could find no one else to quarrel with, John would quarrel with Lilburne and Lilburne with John. The fault I mean is more slight than these. There are people of amiable and unselfish impulses in general, who are morbidly sensitive: they take offence at many fancied injuries. But they are as quick to forgive as they are to resent the look, the tone,

that displeases them; they are like a cloud that flames with lightning often, and keeps the heat of its fury but for a moment, while during all its existence it yields showers of blessing. Their defect does not involve the whole soul: it is one of the minor imperfections; and love and kindness are much larger and more constant traits of the character. Now, it is inevitable that such persons will say and do many things of most unhappy tendency; for there are but few who can restrain themselves as did Socrates when he said to a slave: "If I were not angry I would beat you." Our impatience usually finds expression; and the smaller its occasion, the less inclined are we to guard and suppress it. John Newton writes: "Many Christians who bear the loss of a dear child, or of all their property, with the most heroic fortitude, are entirely vanquished by the breaking of a dish or the blunders of a servant." And we cannot exaggerate the mischief that may be done by one impetuous speech or deed, forgotten by us in a moment, but brought to mind again by its surprising and disastrous results. The gun may lie harmless in the house for a year, and may flash and thunder but once, but in that single response to the touch of a spark it may destroy the most precious life on earth. "You may tame the wild beast," says F. W. Robertson; "the conflagration of the American forest will cease when all the timber and the dry wood is consumed: but you cannot arrest the progress of that cruel word which you uttered carelessly yesterday or this morning."

Discontent is another minor fault which not only de-

stroys the happiness of the woman who cherishes it, but mars that of her family and her friends: however amiable she may be in other respects, this defect, the tiny moth in the cloth of gold, may render comparatively worthless all the robe of her many virtues. But does not discontent belong properly to the outward circumstances, rather than to the character? And if these were changed for the better would it not disappear? No. It arises usually from the disposition, and not from the misfortunes of life. Alexander, who possessed the world, was unhappy in Babylon because ivy would not prosper in his garden there; and in general those who know but little of contentment are persons whose lot has been so favorable that they have not been compelled to learn the lesson. Those who are discontented become such by fixing their eyes on what they have not, rather than on what they have; and, when once this habit is formed, a very insignificant privation is sufficient to overspread the sky with clouds. "I am wonderfully pleased," writes Addison, "with the reply which Aristippus made to one who condoled him upon the loss of a farm: 'Why,' said he, 'I have three farms still, and you have but one; so that I ought rather to be afflicted for you than you for me.'" If the Greek had thought much of the possessions taken from him, he would have grieved; but, considering chiefly those which remained, he was happy. And if we fasten our attention on that we have, rather than on that we lack, a very little wealth is enough. Jeremy Taylor asks: "Is that animal better that hath two or three mountains to graze on, than a little bee that

feeds on dew or manna, and lives on what falls every morning from the clouds, the storehouses of heaven? Can a man quench his thirst better out of a river than a full cup, or drink better from the fountain which is finely paved with marble, than when it wells over the green turf?" The people of Europe say that the Americans are a discontented nation; the lowest and poorest is determined to win station and wealth: whereas the peasant of England or Italy expects to remain such all his days, and rests satisfied in his station. To me this trait of American character seems one of the noblest; yet it is abused and perverted. A lofty ambition is the spring of energy and the incentive to success; but if it is accompanied with fretfulness and repining, if he in whose breast it moves brings upon himself apoplexy or paralysis, or, worse still, dishonor, in his haste to advance, and if the woman stands behind him urging him forward and inflaming his discontent with hers, God pity us! Many a man is driven to madness and ruin by an excellent but discontented mother or wife or daughter; as was Maximilian by Carlotta, and as was Napoleon III. by Eugénie, who, it is said, tempted him to his fatal war with Prussia.

One of the traits which belong to woman by nature is dependence: it is this which appeals to all the chivalry of the true man, and calls out the noblest attributes of his being; it leads him to tenderness and courtesy toward those who need his assistance; it leads him to sternness towards any who would injure them; it leads him to industry in order to provide for their wants; it leads him to softer habits and manners, that he may not be obnox-

ious to their finer tastes. But dependence may degenerate into voluntary helplessness. In avoiding a masculine boldness and insubordination, the young woman may suppose that all strength of body and mind and will should be abandoned, so that she may find her proper sphere in life, and excite the affectionate interest which she craves. The result is misery. Inefficiency may please for a little time; but it soon grows burdensome to him on whom it leans, even though associated with conscientiousness and good temper and ardent love. But hear what a noble woman has said concerning this little fault: "Incidents daily occur which mark either the helplessness or the capacity of every woman. Sudden alarms, trifling accidents, throw one into uncontrollable agitation; while another calmly avoids or relieves the mischief. One is unable to put forth a hand to help herself; the other, without appearance of effort, is ready to help all besides. One cannot stir without support; the other is continually employed in some useful or benevolent purpose. One reclines upon a sofa, establishing no claim on others but her own incapacity; the other, by her perpetual good offices, lays up a debt which is willingly paid on demand, and thus provides in the best way for her own future exigencies." Woman has been compared to a vine, and man to the oak on which it fin support. Let us remember that some vines bring to 1 oak a robe of beauty and a diadem of glory, wrapp its trunk in green leaves, and filling its branches w flowers; while others cast their arms about it in a deac embrace, and choke it until it stands a decaying ar unsightly thing, discrowned, and fit only for the fire.

Vanity is another little fox that creeps into the garden of the most amiable and noble. The heart that cherishes it may be generous to a fault, and inspired with a profound sense of duty; yet it is unhappy unless it hears continually the voice of compliment. It is not satisfied with love; it must have adulation: it is not content with the fondness of those with whom it is most intimately associated in the household; it must hear the praises of the world. But for every woman the time comes when the flatterer is no longer interested in the utterance of his hollow words: beauty fades, and he turns to new objects of admiration. She who has cherished this failing must be wretched indeed, when she perceives that she is no longer the object of general attention: she has not learned to derive her chief comfort from the contemplation of religious truth; she cares little for the pleasures of the intellect and a cultivated taste; and the joys of domestic life are insipid. What resource has she? Here is a picture which you should ponder well: "No creature is more unhappy than an ex-belle. To what expedient does she not resort to prolong her reign, or, at least, to make it believed that she has not gone by? And when she does vanish like a falling star, and there is no trace left of her glittering path, vanity still remains, but only to torment her. It drives her into the slough of envy, or into the quicksands of lassitude. It degenerates into hypochondriasis, or vents itself in ill-humor."

Another little fox, very destructive of morality and happiness, has been named, by those who harbor it, the white lie. This originates often in malice, but more fre-

quently in amiability and kindness: it arises but seldom from our desire to gain any thing for ourselves; usually it has its source in our desire to please, and our dread of wounding those who associate with us. It may take the form of a cruel jest, which you excuse to yourselves as mere sport, but which you are confident will gain a certain degree of credence, and prove annoying, not as a piece of amusement, but as a report that many will accept as true; it may take the form of an argument which you know to be fallacious, but which you think adapted to convince those not sufficiently acute to discover its unsoundness; it may take the form of a hearty greeting to some one whom you detest; it may take the form of a message, sent through the servant, that you are not at home, when, in fact, you are standing behind the blinds of your window to see the retreating figure of your visitor; it may consist, not in the utterance of a falsehood, but in the mere suppression of some fact necessary to the correct interpretation of a case; it may consist of delicate insinuations and innuendoes, for whose purport you do not claim to be responsible, but whose poisonous effect you have anticipated or secretly desired; nay, it may consist of actions, rather than words, as the expression of the face, the posture of the body, the movement of the head. Now these sorts of deception, deemed innocent by many, have an immense power to destroy: indeed, nearly all the mischief of falsehood in the world is wrought by such agencies; for there are comparatively few who resort to bold lying to accomplish their purposes, since the more obscure the

misrepresentation, the more hurtful it is, as it is the more difficult to detect and expose. But this is not the worst. The petty sin debases the person who commits it; the beautiful sincerity of the soul vanishes; the white lie leads to the black lie, the fib to the deliberate falsehood. Those who permit themselves to deceive the sick, the insane, or even animals, are in danger of acquiring a blunted conscience and a habit of careless speech, so that presently they will indulge in much exaggeration, mistake their fancies for facts, make thoughtless misstatements with glib tongues, and lose all reputation for veracity.

I might speak of many other little foxes, such as fickleness, unreasonable prejudices against others, and the love of gossip; but the examples I have given are sufficient to illustrate the danger of indulging in the slightest fault, and the need of resisting all your evil tendencies, however weak. The business I commend to you may seem petty; but in fact it is the grandest in which you can engage. Colton has this anecdote: "A friend called on Michael Angelo, who was finishing a statue. Some time afterwards he called again: the sculptor was still at his work. His friend, looking at the figure, exclaimed: 'Have you been idle since I saw you last?' 'By no means,' replied the sculptor. 'I have retouched this part, and polished that; I have softened this feature, and brought out this muscle; I have given more expression to this lip, and more energy to this limb.' 'Well, well,' said his friend, 'all these are trifles.' 'It may be so,' replied Angelo; 'but recollect that trifles make perfection, and that perfection is no trifle.'"

It has not escaped your notice, during the progress of my argument, that the little fault grows larger in time, so that, while you despise it as unworthy your notice, it becomes your master. Our Lord said: "Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth; but when it is sown it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches, so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it." So also is the kingdom of evil within you. It also has small seed; it also "shooteth forth great branches;" it also casts a shadow; it also is sought by the birds of the air. Its shadow is not the cool covert from the world's garish day, but rather a dense gloom that excludes the light and fervor of Heaven; and the birds that make it their resort are not spirits of beauty and song, but dark and doleful shapes, filling the air with the blackness of their wings and the dissonance of their voices.

These little faults tend to accumulate. If you are indifferent to the depredations of one, it will introduce its fellows, until you are overrun with such a multitude that you have no heart to resist. They are like the birds of prey in "Hiawatha:"—

> "Never stoops the soaring vulture
> On his quarry in the desert,
> On the sick or wounded bison,
> But another vulture, watching
> From his high aërial look-out,

Sees the downward plunge, and follows;
And a third pursues the second,
Coming from the invisible ether;
First a speck, and then a vulture,
Till the air is dark with pinions."

How many imperfections are encouraged by vanity, how many by carelessness concerning the truth, how many by discontent! A throng of hungry faults waits without until you have permitted the most pleasing to enter, when they rush in before you have closed the passage. You must make impartial resistance to all, if you would save yourself from the encroachments of any.

It is more common to neglect the smaller imperfections than the larger: they are more difficult to detect; they appear so slight, when perceived, that they do not startle and shock us; and they seem so powerless that we postpone their conquest indefinitely, and permit them to grow numerous and strong. Is not our peril from little frailties the lesson taught us in the Northern myth of Baldur the Good? He had premonitions of approaching death. His mother, Frigga, therefore went through the whole universe, and exacted an oath from all objects which she deemed hurtful that they would not harm her son; and fire and water, and earth and air, and birds and beasts, and rocks and trees, and diseases and poisons joined in the awful vow. The other gods now regarded him as immortal, and assailed him in sport; and when they tried their weapons upon him they could not pierce his flesh: the lance, the sword, the arrow, recoiled, as if from impervious armor. At length an enemy tipped his

spear with mistletoe, and persuaded another, ignorant of the motive, to hurl it as if in play; when, lo! it entered the breast, and the fairest of the celestial beings expired. His mother, deeming this slender parasite of the forest so insignificant that it could not injure her darling, had not thought of securing its pledge; but though it was weak in itself, when placed on a beam of oak, and cast with the strength of a deity, it became mighty. And there are many who walk safe amidst the greater temptations of the world, which drop harmless at their feet, and yield before the darts of faults at whose feebleness they have smiled.

"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes." "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." "Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy; to the only wise God our Saviour, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now and forever. Amen."

PIETY.

"And when she had so said, she went her way, and called Mary her sister secretly, saying, The Master is come, and calleth for thee. As soon as she heard that, she arose quickly, and came unto him." — JOHN xi. 28, 29.

I WISH to devote one of these sermons wholly to that which, in fact, is the groundwork of all, the claims of Christ upon your soul, and the reasons that you should submit to them at once. Perhaps I cannot find a more appropriate text than this which records the immediate obedience of Mary when the Master sent for her. She came to Him not in her mere bodily presence, but with her whole heart, with the confidence of a friend, and with the burden of her anxieties and griefs, which she gladly laid at His feet. Let me be His messenger. He calls for you. Are you ready to arise and obey His invitation? Bring to Him your cares, your sorrows, your love, your adoration. He is worthy. And since He bids you come, He will not repel you.

In a certain sense it may be said that you are predisposed by your nature and your circumstances to accept the invitation. You have more of reverence, of affection,

and of dependence than man; and hence Augustine has called you "the devout sex." Your sphere of life also shelters you from many temptations to which we are exposed, and gives you a softness of heart which is denied to us. You will not turn from my message: you will receive it with serious attention. May He who sends it give you grace not only to hear, but to obey!

The first argument I would urge is derived from my general subject, the formation of character. As I have spoken concerning the traits you should cultivate, you have said in your hearts: How are we to do this? Who is sufficient for these things? By what means shall we make ourselves so perfect? I answer, that the task, were you left to perform it alone, would be overwhelming; but the Master, who calls for you, is ready to assist. In yourself you find not more ability to grow into such strength and beauty than has the dead staff to produce foliage and fruit. But even this, when laid up before Jehovah in His sanctuary, was transformed into a growing tree: "And it came to pass that on the morrow Moses went into the tabernacle of witness; and behold the rod of Aaron for the house of Levi was budded, and brought forth buds, and bloomed blossoms, and yielded almonds." And Christ is ready to work for you a greater miracle: if you come to Him He will give you life, He will supply the energies you lack, He will bring to you the success you cannot achieve; and all your virtues shall flourish with more than earthly grace.

Again, if you will consider what Christ has done for the character and the fortunes of woman, your gratitude

will constrain you to give Him your hearts. Before His advent, the condition of woman was lamentable, whether we regard her moral degradation, or the unhappiness she suffered. The darkest portions of the picture we must leave wholly veiled: even a partial glimpse of them would shock and wound you too sorely. At the birth of our Saviour, Roman society was the model which the world imitated; and its vices cannot be described. Long before this, according to a tradition which the most sober historians do not wholly discredit, it had found its extreme of brutality in Tullia, the wife of Tarquin, who, riding in her chariot, came to the body of her father, that lay in the street, weltering in blood. The charioteer, in horror, was about to pause, nay, the very beasts that he guided recoiled, when she commanded him, in an imperious tone, to drive on. He did not dare disobey; and, as the way was narrow, the wheels passed over the corpse, and the gore bespattered the garments of the unnatural daughter. Such monstrous instances of filial impiety did not occur often; but was the fashionable inhumanity of the amphitheatre much less revolting? If one of the combatants, by superior strength or dexterity, slew his opponent, he was rewarded with the plaudits, not only of men, but also of matron and maid. You have seen engravings of the celebrated painting in which a group of gladiators pass by the royal pavilion, and address the Cæsar in words which Longfellow has made more memorable, if not more mournful: "We who are about to die salute thee." The great building is crowded to the sky, tier above tier, with the beauty and fashion of the city, keenly anticipating

the slaughter. You have seen, also, another engraving in which the Coliseum is equally choked with its hundred thousand spectators, among whom the women are conspicuous for their numbers and for their grossness of form and expression. The gladiators have fought, and one lies wounded on the ground, his neck under the foot of the victor, who looks up for instruction concerning his further duty. If the thumbs of the people are inverted, it is a command for him to slay his prostrate antagonist: otherwise he will have mercy. Look, now: surely these tender wives and mothers and daughters will intervene for the unfortunate youth! It requires but a movement of the hand. Alas! no: without exception they are giving the signal of death; and you observe that their action is more vehement than that of the men; and they bend forward as they watch till the sword shall be buried in the quivering heart. Nor are these pictures mere creations of the fancy: they represent a dreadful truth. When we consider this, we cease to be surprised that Herodias demanded and her daughter bore the head of John the Baptist: it was in accordance with the spirit of the age that a sex whose nature is compassion should exhibit the ferocity of the hyena; and that even among the chosen people it should manifest hideous corruptions and cruelties.

Or, if we turn from the morals to the misfortunes of women, we shall find no alleviation of the gloom. Their condition in Miletus was so unhappy that suicide at one time became prevalent; and when the government could check it in no other way, it was decreed that the bodies of those who had perished by their own hand should be

disgraced in public. This threat proved effectual: the instinct of modesty triumphed over despair, and the daughters of sorrow consented to live. The women of Rome were under perpetual guardianship; and "the Romans," says Gibbon, "married without love, or loved without delicacy or respect." In a note to this statement he adds: "Metullus Numidicus, the Censor, acknowledged to the Roman people, in a public oration, that had kind Nature allowed us to exist without the help of women, we should be delivered from a very troublesome companion; and he could recommend matrimony only as the sacrifice of private pleasure to public duty." But enough: let us leave the greater horrors untold. I will not maintain that all virtue and joy were unknown: there are oases in the most sterile desert; and every Sodom has its Lot, its preacher of righteousness, vexed with its ungodly deeds; and even before our era, in the darkest parts of the world, there were instances of fidelity, purity, and love. Speaking comprehensively, however, we may say that Jesus has so exalted you that you have ceased to be the jest of man, and have become his inspiration: you are no longer his bond-slave, but his companion, sharing his best fortunes, and sheltered by his devotion. This change has been wrought wholly by Him whose claims I plead; He has set you free; He has raised you from earth to Heaven. Let me ask each one of you, How much owest thou thy Lord? He demands but a simple boon in return for His blessings: give Him your heart; it is all He requires; it is the least you can render for His benefits.

If again you look at the relations you sustain to others, you will find in these a plea which should be irresistible in favor of Christ and His religion.

As a sister, your power is greater than you are aware of. There is something very pathetic in the words of Washington Irving: "Often have I lamented that Providence denied me the companionship of sisters. Often have I thought, had I been thus favored I should have been a better man." The sister is the one from whom the young man forms his estimate of her sex. Rev. William G. Eliot, D.D., has well said: "Woman is to him an object of respect or of contempt, according to what he sees of his sister's mind and heart. She cannot, therefore, be too careful in teaching him to respect as well as love her. She cannot confer upon him a greater kindness than by giving him an exalted idea of womanhood. She cannot inflict a greater injury than by leading him to think that all women are trifling and heartless, indolent except in the pursuit of pleasure, and greedy of admiration." Nor, I may add, can she do him a greater good than to display before him daily the unobtrusive graces of Christ, and with her gentle hand lead him to the fountain whence she herself has drawn strength and purity.

God has given the wife a subtile but boundless influence over the husband: her words color his atmosphere; he sees many things through her eyes. He may not acknowledge this, and his very consciousness of the truth may deter him from the confession; for sometimes he may fear that he will surrender himself too far to a force which is pervasive, constant, mysterious, and grateful as

the light. Cato said: "The Romans govern the world, but the women govern the Romans": they had such power even in their subjection and debasement.

During the American Revolution John Adams wrote from Philadelphia to Mrs. Adams: "I believe the two Howes have not very great women for their wives. If they had, we should suffer more from their exertions than we do. This is our good fortune. A smart wife would have put Howe in possession of Philadelphia long ago." But persons who knew the writer might have thought him little responsive to the power he pronounces so effective. This is Emerson's description of him: "Tender men sometimes have strong wills. We had, in Massachusetts, an old statesman, who had sat all his life in courts and in chairs of state without overcoming an extreme irritability of face, voice, and bearing: when he spoke, his voice would not serve him; it cracked, it broke, it wheezed, it piped. Little cared he; he knew that it had got to pipe or wheeze or screech his argument and his indignation. When he sat down, after speaking, he seemed in a sort of fit, and held on to his chair with both hands. But underneath all this irritability was a puissant will, firm and advancing, and a memory in which lay in order and method, like geologic strata, every fact of his history, and under the control of his will." Now if such a vehement nature felt the soft sway of the woman who guided and graced his home, who is exempt from it? To this benign influence Sir James Mackintosh and our own Gen. Samuel Houston attributed their salvation from vice and ignominy.

You may drag your husband down, or you may raise him up; for he is moved by your faintest smile, your lightest whisper. These verses of Scripture are worthy to be pondered: "It came to pass when Solomon was old, that his wives turned away his heart after other gods; and his heart was not perfect with the Lord his God, as was the heart of David his father." "There was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of God, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." "Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, so that he shall have no need of spoil. She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life." "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation of the wives." How shall you avoid such censures, and win such commendations? Only by bringing your hearts to Christ: He will help you; and your life, under His guidance, shall be so cheerful, so sweet, so amiable, so holy, that "your husband, he also shall praise you," and shall seek the grace that he perceives you have found.

But it is as mother that the power of woman is most supreme; baleful if exercised in a worldly spirit, beneficent if used for the salvation of the souls committed to its charge. Aimé Martin has this anecdote: Napoleon once said to Madame Campan: "The old systems of education are worth nothing: what is wanting in order that the youth of France be well educated?" "Mot ers," was the reply. The Emperor was struck with t

justness of the answer. "Here," said he, "is a system of education in one word. Be it your care to train up mothers who shall know how to educate their children." Has not God been saying this since the world began? What is the purpose of the household but the discipline of tender souls for Christlike activity on earth, and for eternal felicity in Heaven? But how shall you guide your child aright, if you yourself have not found the way? Be a Christian, that you may appear before your Judge at the last day with joy, saying: "Behold me, and the children thou hast given me;" and not with grief, cast out yourself, while those you have reared accompany you in your exile with tears and lamentations.

Those who were committed to you to save, you may destroy, either by your neglect or by your teaching and example. It is said that in all our cities there are mothers who care little when told that their sons are in the haunts of dissipation; they smile, and think these a school necessary in order to make them manly, and to give them an acquaintance with the world. We could scarcely believe a statement so shocking, were it not supported by the evidence of those whose testimony cannot be impeached. How much less culpable are such women than was Catherine de Medici, the mother of Charles IX. of France, who solicited him to vice, in order that, immersed in pleasure and enfeebled in mind and body by excesses, he might leave the reins of power in her hands? What was the result of her unnatural course? It was he who gave the signal for the massacre of St. Bartholomew, and he who died in torments of

remorse, a crimson sweat like that of Gethsemane suffusing his body. "The disease which carried him off," says Voltaire, "is very uncommon; his blood flowed from all his pores." Behold a figure of the sin and the agony which may come to your offspring if you are unfaithful. Surely, when such weighty cares are put upon you, when immortal souls are placed in your charge to bless or to curse, you will invoke divine assistance, and gain the preparation of heart which you need, by coming to the Saviour who calls you.

In all your relations, as daughter, as sister, as wife, as mother, you need to use the power of faithful prayer for those you love. If you have no other way in which to influence them for good, this privilege would render you almost omnipotent; for Jehovah will hear your requests. When Cazotte was imprisoned during the reign of terror in France, his daughter Elizabeth shared his dungeon, rejecting the freedom which was offered to her. This fidelity moved the ferocious authorities of that insane era to spare her father for a time; but at length his execution was ordered. The axe was uplifted to smite off his head, when the heroic maiden broke through the throng, and cast herself upon his neck, bidding the executio strike through her heart if he would reach his vic The multitude of bloodthirsty brutes were touched; shout of pardon was raised; every tongue caught echoed the sound; and, amid the plaudits of all, noble girl led to his home the parent she had protec with her own person. And shall your petitions pro weaker with the good God than were hers with fiendis

men? If they could forgive and spare in answer to her cries, will not He who is your Father? Cover your dear ones in the arms of your supplications, not doubting the result. But first you must have Christian faith; for without this it is impossible to prevail, while with it nothing shall be too great for Heaven to grant.

Once more. Your assistance is needed in various enterprises of social improvement: these must languish if you withhold from them your approval; they must prosper if you lend them your hearty support. There is no vice too dark or too prevalent for you to conquer, if you do but unite and persevere in the effort. It is said that the women of the Mohawks, many years ago, perceiving that the men were addicted to intemperance, called a council to devise measures for its suppression, and actually succeeded in limiting its baleful influence in their tribe. Such is the power of the wives and mothers and daughters and sisters who are held in the thraldom of savage life: yours is infinitely superior. Will you wield it? Ah, I know that usually the devotion necessary does not belong to any one of us by nature; it is only as we bring our languid souls to Christ, and catch the spirit of Him whose zeal consumed Him, that we go forth eager to make such sacrifices as are required of those who would regenerate the world. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem, where, according to tradition, the tomb of our Lord is preserved, incased with marbles and covered with a shrine, is the scene of a wild celebration on the morning of Easter Eve. It is thronged with a dense mass of pilgrims, who wait till fire

is cast forth from an aperture in the sacred enclosure; and from this flame, which they believe to be the immediate gift of Heaven, they kindle their tapers, surging and shouting and singing. In a moment the blaze is communicated from one to another, till the whole vast building is a sea of light, from which the multitude rush, each one bearing a burning candle through the streets. So it is by coming to the slain Redeemer that you are to catch the fervor of the reformer. If you reject His calls, I fear that we shall not have your assistance in the task: if you yield, I know that you shall shine upon the darkness of the earth, and carry the beams of knowledge and purity and salvation wherever you may go.

Your sex is peculiarly exposed to suffering. Your organization is so delicate that you feel intensely; your sensibilities are acute as the strings of an Æolian harp that murmurs responsive to every breeze, breathing forth notes of happiness or of melancholy where grosser instruments are dumb: nothing can touch you, however gently, without arousing your emotions of joy or of sadness. Moreover, there are many calamities which a man may withstand or overcome, amidst which you are helpl And you need Christ for a friend and comforter, at feet you may sit delighted when you are at ease, an whose ear you may pour the story of your sorrow you are afflicted or bereaved, and from whose han may receive back, recalled from the tomb, your b hopes and aspirations. Without Him you are we than man to endure disaster; but with Him you stronger. The late Gardiner Spring says: "I have of

thought that piety has been to woman what it never has been to man. And how has its matchless power been evinced, especially in the storms of keen adversity! Many a time, while the quivering spirit of her hardy compeer has been shattered by the tempest, and when, in powerful apprehension, I have looked to see her frail form sink beneath the billows, has her Heaven-invigorated countenance faced the storm, and her buoyant heart been fixed, trusting in the Lord."

And, lastly, you need Christ for the salvation of your soul. Heaven is open upon one condition for both men and women: it was of Mary, His best friend, that our Lord demanded: "Said I not unto thee that if thou wouldest believe thou shouldest see the glory of God?" All who see that glory gain the privilege by faith in Him who reveals it. Even His mother was saved by becoming His disciple; and you can enter Heaven in no other way: "there is none other name given under heaven among men whereby we must be saved." You share the ruin of the fall; and you can escape from it only by the merit and intercession of the second Adam, who came to undo the work of the first. Should you be lost, how surprising, how pathetic the tragedy! Standing so near to the refuge, possessing such lofty opportunities, and, withal, having so much of gentleness and purity, your banishment would be like that of some erring but still lustrous angel, your fall like that of a star which shines even while it passes swiftly to darkness. By the love of God, by the passion of Jesus Christ, by the ministry of the Holy Spirit, by the joys of Paradise, by

the peril of refusal, I beseech you to repent while the invitation is given, and to secure the assurance that your Judge is reconciled, that your sins are pardoned, that death is conquered, and that in a brighter world you have a home of perfect serenity and delight.

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